PRAYER

Its Nature & Technique

—Kirpal Singh

PRAYER—ITS NATURE AND TECHNIQUE

Sawan Ashram Publications

1. *A brief sketch of the life of Sri Huzoor Baba Sawan Singh ji Maharaj*
2. *Man know Thyself*
3. *Message of the Great Master and His Ashram*
4. *As They saw the Master*
5. *The Jap Ji*

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PRAYER

Its Nature and Technique

by

Kirpal Singh

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श्री नवजीवन एवं सुश्री सुधा को
उनके प्रणय सूत्र बन्धन के पुनीत
पर्व पर सस्नेह

-:नित्यानन्द:-

Dedicated

to the Almighty God

working through all Masters who have come

and Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj

at whose lotus feet

the **writer** *mbibed Sweet elixir of*

Holy Naam—the Word.

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To The Reader

Man shall not live by bread alone, but every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Matt. 4-4

Prayer is the salt of life and we cannot do without it. It is ingrained in the nature of Man to pray for the fulfilment of his wishes whatever these be. But more often than not we do not know what we may really pray for, how to pray and what we may do to make our prayer a great dynamic force as may stir up Heaven's mercy.

The secret of a successful prayer lies not so much in the words we use, nor in the time we devote to it, nor in the effort that we put into it, as it lies in the concentrated attention that one may give it at the seat of the soul so as to make it soulful. The most natural form for a fruitful prayer is the yearning of a soul without the agency of words, oral or mental, with the tongue of thought. A prayer like this generates and releases such a fund of spiritual energy that all the Cosmic Powers are attracted, and combine together, shaping out things as best as possible.

A true prayer is one continuous process, independent of form, time and place, and leads ultimately to the stage of Sehaj—a halcyon calm, a perfect equipoise and a complete satiety, with no desire what-so-ever. This then is the climax of a genuine prayer and here prayer itself ceases to be a prayer and becomes a state of being as one gradually rises first into Cosmic consciousness and then into Super consciousness, with the Divine Will fully revealed unto him. This is the be-all and the end-all of prayer : and how to achieve it is the object of this enquiry.

At the end of the book, by way of an appendix, are collected, in classified form, specimen prayers from various Saints and Scriptures, for the benefit of the interested reader.

—Kirpal Singh

Sawan Ashram, Delhi.
Dated, the 1st July, 1959.

MY WISHES COUNT BUT LITTLE:
LET THY WILL PREVAIL.

—NANAK

PRAYER

Prayer is the Master-Key that unlocks the Kingdom of Heaven:

Prayer can be defined as an anguished cry of the soul in distress or helplessness to a Power fuller and greater than itself, for relief and comfort. It is, in generic and commonly accepted sense, an invocation to God or God-man (A living Master), competent enough to grant solace, and peace to a mind torn and tortured in the tussle and turmoil by the problems of life and life's surroundings.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast."

—Viscount Montgomery

A worldly wise man in this scientific age regards human life just as any other mechanical contrivance which moves and acts blindly on the lone principle of 'Cause and Effect' with no guiding hand behind it. Against this mechanistic concept of man and the universe there is an organic concept as well. Without denying the

principle of 'Cause and Effect' that is visibly in operation in human affairs, the exponents of the organic theory see behind it the hand of God or the Law of God in and through which the principle of 'Cause and Effect' is at work. The Law of God then is the motor power or seed force from which every conceivable principle—scientific or ethical—springs and works out the Divine Will according to His purpose. We unfortunately see only the surface currents and cannot penetrate into the depths beneath.

In common experience we see that a worldly wise man with all the material resources at his command is actually in a state of dire helplessness. Ever dissatisfied with what he has, he cries for more and blindly works to that end, employing all means, fair or foul, to achieve his desires. But all his riches and possessions, pelf and power, name and fame, fail to give him any degree of satisfaction. He still continues as helpless as ever before and perhaps more in the face of disease, decay and death. His mind is always haunted by untold fears and imaginary horrors. With no moorings, he drifts rudderless upon the ocean of life, a prey to chance winds and waters. In this sad plight, either he flounders on the rock of suicide or if he escapes that, he drags on a weary existence until death comes to his rescue. But even in death he finds no comfort. He yields to it simply

because he cannot help otherwise. This is the sad story of a common man of the work-a-day world.

On the other hand, a really wise man also tries like the former, to collect means of a comfortable existence but unlike the other, these do not, in his case, form an obsession with him. Behind all his efforts, he sees the hand of God and is never bothered by success or failure in his endeavours. He leaves the result to the 'Divine Will' for that alone knows what is good for him to possess. If things come to him as he desires, he does not feel elated but accepts them with sincere thanks and with a grateful heart. But if the things turn the other way, he does not feel dejected but smilingly bows down his head before the Supreme Judge who decided otherwise and at every step, he prays to God for he knows that without His active aid, he cannot do anything by himself.

'Prayer' is, in a strict sense, another name for collecting the outgoing and wandering faculties of the mind at the root of the mind. Like the rays of the sun, these spread out into the world, and likewise these can be withdrawn and collected at their source. A person in infatuation with a thing which he cannot get or in distress and distraction over some calamity from which he cannot escape, sets his face towards God for success in his endeavours or comfort in his

woe-begone condition as the case may be. This concentration whilst begging for help is called prayer.

Human mind is the throne of God and hence it is, at times, termed *'Kaaba'*.

"Of all the pilgrimages, the one to the human
mind is the most sacred,
Much better it is to win merit here than
countless trips to Mecca." —Maulana Rumi

As soon as a person collects himself and focuses his attention at the seat of the mind, he stirs up the mercy of God which, in turn, fills him with strength and fortitude never experienced before. These enable him to find a way out of the difficulty whatever it be. A will, when concentrated, works wonders. "Where there is a will, there is a way" is a common saying. Prayer is nothing but concentrated will falling back upon its source, the great reservoir of power, in which are lodged all sorts of possibilities—physical, mental and spiritual—and one can draw upon any of these according to one's needs. Great indeed is man. He lives in a God-made temple along with God Himself. His very spirit is just a drop from the ocean of Divine life. Between God and spirit, there is no other obstacle but that of a veil of the mind. If this veil were to stop fluttering in the breeze of desires, as it does at present, the spirit can take in directly the Cosmic Energy from its very source.

"As you think, so you become" is a common adage. If a part were to think of the whole, it gradually begins to imbibe the characteristics of the latter. So is the case with a human spirit. It can gradually expand until it becomes all-embracing from the cribbed, cabined, cramped and cringing position that it occupies in its present state. When freed from its entanglements—physical, mental and causal—it triumphantly cries out; "I am soul" or "I am as Thou art" or "I and my Father are one" (as Christ puts it).

There are two types of people in the world: first those who can withdraw, introvert and take inspiration directly from the Great Power within. Secondly those who depend on outer aids, like churches and temples for worship and offering prayers at the altars or before idols and statues. Some try to seek inspiration from the great forces of Nature, like the sun, the moon, the snow covered hill tops, waters of the sacred rivers, as different manifestations of the One Power behind the entire universe. Everyone according to his faith and degree of concentration gets some benefit from his mode of worship, for nothing is lost in Nature and no effort goes in vain.

Some people do not believe in the existence of God and as such have no faith in prayer, for they do not realise that God has no objective

appearance and cannot be seen by the eyes of flesh.

"O Nanak! the eyes that behold the Lord are quite different from those with which we see the world." —Maru War: M.5

And truth, in fact, is that God is spirit and can be worshipped in spirit only. We cannot worship Him with human hands and much less in hand-made temples and synagogues. He dwells in the in-most depths of the human soul. He is the soul of our very soul. He is immanent in every form and not apart from forms. All colours and all patterns alike take their hue and design from Him alone. Whether we believe in Him or not, we actually live in Him and have our very being in Him.

True prayer then is the means to concentrate the wandering wits at one centre—the centre of the soul—to gather up the spirit currents at the still point in the body, between and behind the eyes. Herein lies all worship, all prayers, all renunciation and all knowledge of here and hereafter. The path to salvation lies in the diret touch with the Inner Power rather than to get entangled in this or that thing. "Truth is one, though sages have described it variously" is a well known Upnishadic saying. Why not then search out the Eternal Truth of which Nanak speaks:

"Truth was in the beginning of Creation, Truth has been the beginning of each Age, and

Truth shall ever remain when all ages and creations pass away." —Jap Ji

2. *Prayer—Instinctive in man.*

Prayer is instinctive with man and no one can do without prayer at one stage or another, whatever form it may take. The faithful and the faithless, a *Momin* and a *Kafir*, a man of God and a man who has no belief in God, all pray, each one, of course, in his own particular way. The need for prayer generally arises when one finds himself in distress, in calamity or in the grip of some devastating disease or when he desires satisfaction of some unusual physical and spiritual need which he cannot otherwise fulfil, or when he wants to combat forces of adversity or darkness. In such circumstances, he feels that by his own unaided efforts he cannot secure satisfaction of his wants, and in utter helplessness he seeks strength in prayer. In everyday life we see a student seeking the aid of a teacher in the solution of some difficult problems, a patient in illness that of a physician, an employee that of his employer and so on. All these are prayers in varying degrees and forms. Again, for the satisfaction of his daily needs, a child looks up to his parents, a wife to her husband etc.

In all trying circumstances, prayer is the last weapon in our armoury and comes handy. Where all human efforts fail, prayer succeeds.

"...More things are wrought by prayer than this
world dreams of...
...For what are men better than sheep or goat,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If knowing God, they lift not their hands in
prayer,
Both for themselves and those they call friends."

—Tennyson

When prayer is the salt of life, we cannot do without it. But pray to whom? The answer naturally is "To the one supreme God or the God-man in whom His power resides and through whom it works in the world." All the religions are in agreement on the point that prayer at the seat of the soul wells out all the latent powers of Godhood within and one can achieve spiritual beatitude through it. It is a connecting link between the Creator and His creation, between God and man. It is a supporting staff in the hands of a spiritual aspirant and a pilgrim soul cannot do without it, right from the beginning to the end of the journey, for it saves one from many a pitfall on the way and transforms the mind through and through until it shines forth and begins to reflect the light of the soul.

"Through His Grace the osprey turns into a
royal swan,
O Nanak! He may make a cygnet of a crow."

—Sri Rag M.I

3. Prayer—Whom to address:

One must pray to the Lord God alone who is omnipotent and competent to grant all wishes.

"There is nothing which God cannot grant."

—Kabir

"Rich indeed is one who has Nature at his beck and call." —Guru Arjan : Gauri M.5

The various gods and goddesses have a limited scope and sphere of action and so work within limitations. They themselves draw their powers from Him and may or may not grant the petty boons that lie within their sphere and certainly cannot grant salvation to the soul. A freed soul can grant freedom and none else can. Guru Arjan tells us that God alone can remedy all types of maladies, no matter physical (like aches, ailments and various types of diseases), astral (like unforeseen and unpredictable disasters from accidents, thunder and lightning, floods and earthquake shocks etc.) or causal (ingrained and inherent evil propensities like lust, anger, greed, attachment and egoism).

"God ! Thou art the dispeller of all evils and bestower of peace,
Whosoever prays unto Thee, can have no ill."

—Todi M.5

"The dawn of Heaven's Light makes one a worshipper of Truth alone,
The blossoming of loving devotion makes one forget lifeless objects of adoration,

The knowledge of Him shows the futility of all rites and rituals,
The manifestation of the holy light within, distinguishes the pure from the impure."
—Guru Gobind Singh

Again, Guru Arjan says:

"I pray to Him who is bestower of all blessings and saviour from all ills,
Shower Thy mercy, O Merciful! for then will my efforts be well directed." —Sri Rag M.5

"Remember the One and sing thou His praises,
Chant His holy name and keep Him ensconced in thy heart,
Ceaselessly meditate on His endless attributes, and,
Serve Him with all thy heart and soul.
God is one, peerless and precious,
Complete in Himself, all-pervasive and permeating,
Creator of the vast creation is that One,
Worship then the One and none besides,
Be saturated, body and mind, in His love,
O Nanak! through the Grace of the Master, is that One realised." —Gauri M.5

"If ever thou hast a wish, ask the Lord for its fulfilment,
It shall be granted unto thee, the Master is witness thereto.
Boundless riches come from Him and so doth the Elixir of Life,

Merciful is the dispeller of all fears and ever abideth with His slave." —War Sri Rag M.4

"I pray to Thee, O Lord, the Lord Thou art of my body and soul,
Nanak attributes his greatness to Thee, for none knew him ever before." —Asa M.5

"Thou art the woof and warp, O Lord, and I pray unto Thee,
For Thou art my altar, whether in pleasure or in pain I be." —Suhi M.4

"In vain we pray to the people of the world full of troubles as they are,
Pray alone to the Lord if wishest thou to cross the ocean of life." —Gujri M.5

In the holy Quran, it is clearly stated that God alone need be invoked, for, an invocation to Him is the only true invocation in the correct sense of the word.

Similarly, Abraham, while denouncing his own followers, declared :

"I leave you and all the gods that you worship. I just call upon my God and I am confident that I shall not remain empty-handed."

Again he addressed them thus :

"O ye faithful, let us unite and come to a common ground—the ground of Divinity—and worship none else but God and consider not anyone else on par with Him, for none can equal Him." —Al-Umar : Ayat 9-10

The instinct of love cannot come into play unless one sees the beloved. As long as we do

not see Godhead or the the glory of God, we cannot have any faith in the existence of God and without this, all prayers go in vain. But Guru or God-man is the abode of God's Light and is a radiating centre of the same. We can pray with equal efficacy to the Master, who is at one with God. Connected as he is, with the Power House behind him, he is equally competent to grant our desires and fulfil our wishes. It is said that,

"God manifests Himself in the form of a *Sadh* (a disciplined soul)." —Maru M.5

Again, Christ tells us:

"God reveals Himself through His prophets."

In Gurbani, we have:

"God speaks through a *Sadh*." —Gauri M.5

A Muslim divine tells us:

"His (Master's) words are *Allah*'s (God's) words though seemingly these may appear to be coming from a human tongue."

A prayer to the living Master is as good as a prayer to God. One must, therefore, wholly and solely depend on the Master and turn to Him for the fulfilment of all his desires.

So all prayers should be addressed to one who holds the mystery of life and death in his hands. We must have perfect faith, in the living God who lives and moves amongst us in a human form. With the attention fully focussed on Him, we ought not to think of anyone else.

This is the one way we can commune with Him. Kabir Sahib tells us that distance does not count in the relationship between the Master and the disciple. The two may be separated by vast oceans in between, but the very thought of the Master in the disciple is bound to attract the Master's attention and he can direct him (the disciple) wherever he may be. Of Vivekananda, it is said, that when he rose to address the World Congress of all Religions in Chicago (U. S. A.), he, for a while, felt diffident. He asked for a glass of water, closed his eyes for a moment, and thought of his Master (Paramhans Ramakrishna, the sage of Dakshneshwar) and in an instant, the flood-gates of inspiration opened within him, and he delivered an unprecedented and impassioned discourse before the august assemblage lasting for several hours. A God-man is a veritable king and at his door, all the mighty kings of the earth bow down their heads in humble supplication and seek for the fulfilment of their cherished desires and attainment of their otherwise unattainable ambitions.

Guru Arjan saith in this context:

"He has within his controlling power all the
potentates,
Nay, the vast creation itself is under his sway.
His will reigns supreme everywhere,
And nothing lies outside his Divine Will;
O offer thy prayer to thy Master alone,
For he shall fulfil all thy heart's desires.

His seat is in the highest heavens, and
Devotion unto him lies in communion with His Word.
All pervading, he is complete in himself,
And His light shines in every heart,
His remembrance dispels all sorrows,
Even the angel of death does not come near his devotee.
The dead come to life by the Power of His Word, and
The lowliest and the lost are received and honoured.
O Nanak ! thy prayer has been heard and accepted, and
Through the Grace of the Master, His light has been made manifest within." —Gauri M.5

A God-man has within his grasp, all that one may need—the gifts of *Dharma*. *Artha*, *Kaama* and *Moksha* (the merits of righteousness, earthly riches and possessions, fulfilment of wishes and desires and the salvation itself).

"If one wants any of the four great boons
He must take to the service of a *Sadh*.
If one wishes to have a riddance from affliction and sorrow,
One must commune with the Word in the depths of one's soul.
If one is after name and fame,
One must lose his ego in the company of a saint.

If one be afraid of the pangs of birth and death,
One must seek shelter at the lotus feet of a saint."
—Gouri M.5

From the above it is abundantly clear that we must go in prayer unto God or a God-man and after being able to commune with Him, we should depend on Him alone and not on any other power; for He alone is capable to draw one out from the mighty swirls and eddying pools of mind and matter, and to apply a healing balm to the lacerated hearts torn by wild desires and temptations. He is the strength of the weak, the sheet-anchor in the storm and stress of life and a haven of safety for the homeless. His glance of Grace soothes the broken hearts.

"A perfect Master attends to the heart,
And from heart to heart, a life impulse darts."
—Bhai Nandlal.

It behoves a disciple to unhesitatingly unburden his mind to his Master and place his difficulties before him, no matter wherever he may be, for the Master is above time and space and can attend to his disciple's tale of woe.

"Rip open thy mind before thy Master;
Cast aside all thy cunning and eleverness, and
Take refuge body and soul at His feet."
—Gujri M.5

In the holy Quran, we have:

"Except him, there is none who listens to the woeful tale of the distressed and the

agonised cry of the helpless and renders solace unto him."

Christ's remarks in this behalf are significant enough:

"That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you."

—John 15-16

"If ye shall ask anything of the Father, He will give it you in my name." —John 16-23

"If ye shall ask me anything in my name, that will I do." —John 14-14

Since God or a God-man is the treasure-house of all blessings, we must, offer our prayer to either of them and to none else.

4. *Prayer—A direct appeal to God within:*

In worldly matters we do seek the help of persons who are more intelligent and capable than we are. We also offer prayers for aid to God—the greatest power conceivable—and that no doubt is a correct approach to the most difficult and baffling problems which confront us every day in the course of our lives. But to regard that Omnipotent Power as something separate and apart from us and to appeal to Him as to an outside benefactor is assuredly a sorrowful mistake which is made by us, for He is the very soul of our soul, and is ever working within and without us and we, in fact, live and have our very being in Him. The secret of success lies in direct prayer and appeal to the

power within as these bear sure fruit and in abundance. We do a great injustice both to Him and to ourselves when we think of God residing on snow-capped mountains, or under the depth of sacred rivers and water springs or in temples and mosques, or in churches and synagogues, or in this or that holy place. Limited as we are in time, space and causation, we try to limit the Limitless within narrow grooves that imagination can conceive of. Such belief on our part and consequent frustrations that result therefrom not infrequently tend to make us sceptical of Him.

When the reservoir of all power is in each one of us, we can, by a dip therein, become spiritually great and powerful. As physical exercises make us robust and strong physically, so do spiritual exercises awaken in us latent spiritual powers. By means of these we can pull up the sluice-gates and thus flood our very being with Divine Currents. When a person becomes Divinised or Divinity Personified, the very Nature which is the hand-maid of God, begins to dance at his beck and call to fulfil all his needs and requirements.

A strong will does forge ahead and makes a way for itself. We do at times by praying to some supposed powers without, succeed in our endeavours. Such success is in fact due to a little concentrated effort on our part rather

than to any outside agency. In this way we not only deceive ourselves, but gradually perpetuate the self-deception to an extent that in course of time it becomes a part of us, and we cannot but look upon God as something extraneous to us, and the worst of it is that we do not at all come in contact with the untold treasures of Divinity that lie within us and constitute our own heritage. It is only after the inner contact with Him has been established that we can truly understand His pervasiveness in the Universe and see His glory everywhere. Without this direct perception and first-hand experience of Him within, our conception of God is just hearsay or bookish and hence erroneous and our prayers to Him a meaningless jargon of words.

5. *Prayer and Effort :*

Prayer and Effort go cheek by jowl. We pray to God for what ?—for the success of our endeavours. Should we wish for a thing, we must try for it and alongside of our efforts to achieve it pray that God may grant it. Prayer is just the last weapon and a sure one that comes to our aid. Where all human efforts fail, prayer succeeds.

"...More things are wrought by prayer, than this
world dreams of." —Tennyson

As a bird cannot fly on one wing only nor a chariot can move on one wheel, so effort and

prayer are to go together if we want success in all our ventures. One of them by itself can achieve nothing. As long as a person is not fully Divinised or in other words does not become a conscious co-worker with the Supreme Power by understanding His Will, he cannot do without endeavour, for God helps those who help themselves.

A mere prayer without endeavour seldom bears fruit. Just take the instance of a boy who gets late for school. If he were to sit down on the roadside to pray, he would be running against time. If he wants to gain time, he must run and pray and it is possible that even if he be late his teacher may forgive him because of the effort he has made to reach in time. To have a ruling passion for an objective and to work hard for achieving the same, is the right type of prayer in the truest sense of the word. Effort should be combined with prayer, for a mere lip service to reach the goal will not help much. In all sincerity one should pray and indeed the very striving for a thing with heart and soul, is the greatest prayer and is bound to fructify. In all trials and tribulations one must try to rid of one's weariness and pray to God that He may help you in your endeavours. This is the only right attitude. In *Quran*, it is said that when Moses and Harun prayed for victory over Pharaoh, God, accepting

their prayers, commanded them to stand steadfast and not to follow the tracks of those who were ignorant of the Reality. Moses too commended his followers to be true and seek the help of God. In moments of storm and stress, never grow disheartened, and more so as you stand on the bed-rock of God and God-man. If, in spite of this, you fail in your endeavours, then take that failure as coming from God for your good.

6. *Prayer—Its essentials :*

"If ye then being evil, know how to give good gift unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him."

—Matt. 7-11

A prayer never goes in vain. A cry from the heart is always heard and attended to, but how and in what manner depends on the Will of God.

"A prayer of a devotee never goes in vain."

—Bilawal M.5

"Whatever a devotee asks of Him,
That cannot but happen." —Asa M.5

"He doth grant whatever is asked of Him,
O Nanak! the words of a devotee prove true here and hearafter." —Dhanasri M.5

In the Sikh scriptures it is mentioned that the Father God ordained that He would freely give, whatsoever His children may ask of Him:

"The Ever-kind Father has pledged to fulfil what His children may desire." —Malar M.5

The Holy Quran likewise vouchsafes this very idea when it states:

"God has said, call upon Me and I shall accept thy call."

And again:

"O Rasul (Mediator) whenever any person enquires of Me, tell him that I reside in him and I listen to his prayers whatever the same may be."

Saint John declares:

"All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that you have received them and ye shall have them." —John 15 : 13-14

In the Gospel of St. Matthew, we have:

"Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you, for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

—VII : 7-8

In actual experience, however, we find that most of our prayers do not bear any fruit. We have, therefore, to study the question rather critically as to what type of prayer is acceptable to God and how that prayer is offered and why all prayers are not accepted. For success in prayers there are certain essentials, like,—

(*i*) *Faith in God* is the root cause of success. We may deceive ourselves and those around us,

but we cannot deceive the inner power—God. In offering prayers, we run a great handicap race. We are not true in our thoughts, words and deeds. There is in fact no harmony between the three. We depend too much on our own cunning, manoeuvring and scheming. We have no confidence in God and His powers. Our prayers do not arise from the depths of our soul. Far from being an anguished cry, we mechanically utter a few words of hurried prayer. It is just doing a lip service to God which is not even skin deep. No wonder then that these perfunctory and ceremonial prayers for form's sake go in vain and are not heard. We must realise that God is great and have faith in His munificence, and that He knows our inmost thoughts and the very working of our mind, for:

"He knows what lies within the folds of our
mind,
And is fully aware of the afflictions of all :
the virtuous and the vile."

—Guru Gobind Singh

(*ii*) *Surrender to God*: With faith in God, the next step automatically is to surrender one's all at the feet of God. When the little self loses itself in the greater self, the latter works and acts for and on behalf of the former. In such a case there hardly remains the need of actual prayer,—

"O mind ! be acceptable to thy Lord,
Be ye all humble and lowly unto Him".

—Dev. M.5

(*iii*) *Love for God* is another pre-requisite for successful prayers. We ought to be grateful to Him for what He has done for us without our asking, before we ask Him for further boons. We must love and respect His commandments and strictly follow the same. We bow down a thousand times before Him but we do not unfortunately take His words seriously. Little do we realise that He is not apart from His words.

"If ye love Me, keep my commandments."

—Christ

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." —John 15-7

"Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give the desires of thine heart".

—Psalms 37-5

(*iv*) *Right attitude* is another essential for expecting favours of God. Right attitude may be considered in relation both to God and man. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayers shall be abomination."

—Psalms 28-9

"And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

—I Joh 3-22

Again, if we want God to forgive our trespasses, we must be prepared to forgive freely the trespasses of others.

"When ye stand praying, forgive if you have aught against any, that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses."
—Matthew

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours."
—Matt. 6:12-15

(v) *Fear of God*: We do not live in fear of the Lord. He is the very soul of our souls but we shamelessly do a lot of things in secret as if He knows them not. We feel ashamed to do a sinful act in the presence of a toddler of tender years, but have not even that much of regard for the king of kings enthroned within us and looking not only to all our deeds but even reading our thoughts and knowing the drift of our instincts and propensities lying in the limbo of our sub-conscious mind. His fear alone can make us fearless of the world, but unfortunately we live in a state of perpetual fear from all the sundry and go about cringing petty favours here and there.

"Like us, as father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."
—Psalms 103-13

"Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief."
—Mark 9-24

(vi) *Purification*: Purity of body, mind and soul is the most important factor in winning the

love of the Lord. It may be considered in three different stages—Repentance, Forgiveness and Abstention.

(*a*) *Repentance*: Nothing under heaven is perfect and each one of us has his own weaknesses. Sin has come to man as a heritage from Adam. Mind in man is the agent of the Negative Power, and it leaves no opportunity to tempt man against God. In daily life we slip at every step. Our best resolves, resolve into airy nothings when temptations assail us. Unaided we cannot possibly escape from the cunning wiles, subtle snares and wild clutches of *Kaal* or the Lord of Time, *i.e.*, the mind. It is only the Saving Arm of the Master that can protect us and rid us from its terrible onslaughts. But every time that we fall a prey to temptations we must realize our weakness and sincerely repent for what we have done.

(*b*) *Forgiveness*: Repentance though good in itself, cannot alter the past. Each act of omission or commission leaves its indelible impress upon the mind and singles us out for its reaction or fruit. In this way countless Karmic impressions go on accumulating day in and day out making additions to our *Sanchit Karmas* (a vast storehouse of unfructified actions). Nobody can escape through this tremendous load which has far-reaching effect, extending sometimes to hundreds of lives and over. Is there no remedy

then to burn away the powder magazine before it blows us out ? The saints tell us that there is a way and a sure one indeed. Prayer for forgiveness is a positive weapon in the hands of a sinner. There is a hope for everybody including the sinners. Saints come into the world to save the sinners and the lost. An association with a Master-Soul goes a long way in liquidating the Karmic account. While He forgives in His Saving Grace our daily lapses, He at the same time enjoins abstention from repetition of the same. 'So far and no further' is their admonition. 'Go and sin no more', was the usual advice with Christ and of Master Sawan Singh too, who used to advise his disciples to make a halt wherever they were and to sin no more. The past actions can be washed off, provided we refrain from sowing any more of the dragon's teeth.

(c) *Abstention*: While repentance and forgiveness help us in escaping the effect of *Kriyaman* or day-to-day acts we have yet to guard against future repetitions. No purificatory process can help us through unless we put a period to the incessant round of the Karmic wheel that gets momentum from every act that we do.

At times a magistrate may award a lesser penalty for a crime but that may not ennoble the criminal. In the dispensation of the Master, there is always the stern admonition which is so very necessary an element in keeping a person

on his guard. He has to wash a sinner clean so as to befit him for journey Homewards. Like a Master sculptor, he has to chisel hard to bring shape and form out of a formless piece of stone.

In brief, it is necessary that we must first of all mould our life according to the instructions of the Master, and feel a genuine delight in thinking of Him. Secondly, we must understand His Will and pray for those things that are to His liking ; and thirdly, we must learn to accept smilingly His decrees whatever they be.

Last but not the least, love is the soil on which life thrives the most. Lover gives and never takes favours. If one tries to live a godly life, all God's favours automatically flow down to him. One who loves God need not ask for any favour. It is enough for us to dedicate our very life to Him and become His bounden slave. It is upto Him to treat us as He wishes. To live in His Holy Presence is its own reward and there can be no reward greater and richer than this.

"Downright heresy it is to pray,
To ask God to take the calamity away."

—Maulana Rumi

"Thy frowns are fairer far
Than the smiles of many maidens are."

—S. T. Coleridge

"There is exhilarating sweetness
Even in thy frowns, O Master." —Suhi M.5

7. *Prayer—Hurdles in the way—Intellectualism and Philosophism.*

Some feel that when God knows even the inner-most secrets of our minds, wherein lies the need for prayer ? Some others think that when God is to grant a gift for the asking, we may not in ignorance ask for things that may ultimately be harmful or injurious to us and we may have to repent for our folly. Still others belive that God who is more than our earthly father, knowing what is good for His children would provide that without our asking and keep back that which may be detrimental to our interest. Despite all these arguments, the saints insist on offering prayers. Doubtlessly God know our needs :

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him." —Matt. 6-8

"His greatness lies in His Omniscience."

—Asa. M.I

"He knows the secret of every heart,
And what lies hidden underneath."

—Guru Gobind Singh

"My *Kirdgaar* (Creator) knows of my needs much better than I do."

—A Muslim Divine

Still the underlined object in offering prayer is that we may know and understand our needs, be prepared for the fulfilment of the same when the time comes and be thankful to Him.

"We are thy children, O Master,
Grant thou the gift of right understanding."

—Asa M.4

"To the ignorant children, Father giveth the light." —Kalyan M.4

Sometimes it might seem that our prayers for riddance from calamities are not heeded, but in all certainty we do get from them fortitude enough to withstand them and strength to successfully combat them without feeling their sting and their pinching effect.

8. *Inner difficuities—How to overcome.*

(*i*) *Purity* : Heart is the pulpit for offering prayer and must, therefore, be cleaned and purified before we engage in a prayer. Purity of heart consists in :

Respectful and humble attitude towards God free from all cares and anxieties of the world.

"The All-Knowing Himself sets right everything,
To Him, O Nanak! offer ye thy prayer."

—Maru War M.2

"With folded hands offer thy prayers."

—Bhairon M.5

(*ii*) *Humility* born of helplessness, coupled with confidence and faith in Him.

(*iii*) *Loving Devotion* : Next we have to still the mind, to make it free from the mental oscillations that continuously pull it right and left. To achieve stillness of the mind we have

to find out within some centre, or some pole to which it may be drawn time and again so that gradually we succeed in stilling the mind at will. Unless any such ground is found out, an aspirant is in a very delicate and a slippery state. As he withdraws from the outer world and its associations and awaits for a dawn of the new world, he is haunted by countless seed impressions hitherto lying buried in the depth of unconciousness. One can free himself from these either by right contemplation or by seeking aid through prayer to the Power within. The surest and the easiest way to cross over these hurdles is to think of the form of the Master and to fix one's attention in that form. This 'tapping inside' or 'knocking' as it grows continuous and steady, gradually forces open the 'Way-in', bringing to view endless vistas of spiritual visions and rapturous strains of Divine Symphonies.

Again there are myriads of obstacles in the inner path. Sometimes an aspirant gets no response to his prayers and begins to doubt their efficacy. At others, far removed from God, he finds himself in a strange and vast stillness and feels his own vibrations. Still others get entangled in the deep darkness behind the eyes and cannot penetrate into the beyond. So bewildering and complicated are these regions of darkness and silence that one

feels he has lost his way. Inspite of his best efforts, he totters over and over again, tries to be on his legs but slips over. This is indeed a very sad and a delicate situation. By his unaided efforts, he cannot safely come out of this labyrinth. It is in such weird and eerie surroundings that instructions from a Master-Soul can be of avail to him. These are just a few of the countless difficulties with which this path is strewn. The Negative Power has a regular net-work of pitfalls to thwart designs even of the wisest and the wariest of the souls and by all kinds of wiles tries to ambush the weary traveller on the path. Its triumph lies in keeping the *Jivas* or embodied souls entirely in its clutches so that its sway over them remains undiminished and its glory undimmed. One can escape these dark forces only through the help of one who has himself conquered them, for such forces live in fear of him and do not molest a soul that is in league with him. The long arm of the Master and his strong hand can lead a *Jiva* unscathed through all dangers with which the inner path is beset at every step.

9. *Prayer—Its three types :*

There are three ways of offering a prayer, namely :

(*i*) *Vocal or oral*—that is to say a prayer offered by means of tongue of words of mouth. It consists in repeating some set prayer as

recorded in scriptures or as given by this or that *Mahatma* as a 'model prayer.' Some feel that such prayers are not of much consequence. A prayer in fact is not a mere repetition of particular words but an anguished cry of an individual soul arising from its deepest depths. Such oral prayers may be likened to the borrowed clothings which never fit the borrower. As models these are very valuable and we should try to make such impassioned appeals directly from the innermost recesses of our mind, truly depicting our feelings and emotions.

(*ii*) *Mental* : A prayer may be repeated by the tongue of thought alone. This can be done only when one can prepare a suitable ground for it within himself. One must see the presence of God and be able to concentrate his thoughts before offering a thanks-giving to Him making free and frank confessions of all his shortcomings and seeking His aid in all his endeavours. It is an art and like any other art requires a great deal of patience and steadfastness, as is necessary in learning music or painting. To start with, the mind has to be trained and stilled by constant thought of the Master which works like a goad (or the steel rod used by *mahouts* (elepant drivers) for keeping the animal under control. After offering such a prayer one must, for some time, wait for His Grace or blessedness; which

descends like gentle dove, says Christ. With it also comes peace that thrills one throughout from head to foot. Once a person tastes of this he feels a perfect satiation within himself. The infatuation of the world with its wondrous charms fall off like a discarded and a long-forgotten thing in the limbo of the past. In the world, he is now no longer of the world. What a wondrous change indeed? Some people consider this as the be-all and end-all of spirituality. But this is not the case. This change in outlook is but a precursor or a harbinger of the advent of the luminous form of the Master and much more thereafter.

(iii) Spiritual: For true spirituality, a *Sadhak* has yet to wait and watch. As he continues his *Sadhana*, he occasionally transcends his physical sheath and meets the Master in his self-refulgent form. Thence ownards countless vistas of spiritual scenes unfold themselves before his inner vision. These are beyond description. While yet a denizen of this world, he gets an access to higher regions, from whence comes nothing but Blessedness. Here he gets dyed through and through in the true colour of pure spirituality. Now he is no more a 'Worldly-wise' as he used to be, but is charged with spirituality. He is altogether transformed into a highly Divinised person established in his Divinity or God-head. This may be termed

'Mystical Prayer'. In this type of prayer an aspirant has nothing to do. It is all wrought by the Master. Once he takes charge of the soul, it becomes his responsibility to work out this transformation by gradually eliminating all traces of the dross and converting the soul into sterling gold. Even a most elementary experience of this stage, sets at rest all doubts and misgivings. It is enough to awaken a soul into Cosmic Awareness and from then onward it is no longer a prey to scepticism and is established in its own. In its naked pristine glory, it cries out—'I am the soul' or 'I am as Thou art' or 'I am *Brahm*.'

10. Loud Prayers :

Prayers when uttered loudly do for the time being work like a lever in lifting the mind upwards and bring about a sobriety, but as we do not understand their proper value and significance, these do not help in preparing the ground for raising the spiritual superstructure. On the contrary we often feel entangled in public applause and approbation. The result more often than not is that we fall an easy prey to self-deception. As these do not come from the depth of the soul they sound hollow without a single true ring in them. They may be used to capture the imagination of an audience for the moment, but do no ultimate good to those engaged in it, either as performers or as listeners. These at times create physical

sensation and bring about a trance but do not lead to Conscious Awareness, which can only come with self-knowledge. God cannot be cowed down by loud and strong words nor does He need them. He is the very soul of the soul and can hear the faintest and feeblest tread of an ant. He knows our wants even more than we do, and long before we even feel of them. The riches of spirituality do not at all come with loud protestations or professions. A prayer in the deep silence of the mind and uttered with the tongue of thought alone is capable of bearing any fruit. The rest is all in vain.

"Call upon thy God in all humility and in all silence."

—Quran

Again :

"You need not shout, for He knows everything."

—Quran

"He hears an ant's call before he does the trumpet of an elephant."

—Guru Gobind Singh—Akal Ustat

11. Individual and Public Prayers :

In individual prayer, there is of course no need to utter words loudly. One has just to change the course of one's thoughts from one channel to another. In it, mental *Simran* is quite enough.

"What is there in the quest of God,
Transplant the mind and see Him all."

—Shah Inayat

In public prayers we generally lose sight of real personal emotions and inspite of ourselves drift into hyperbole. In a prayer like this, there is no harmony between the mind and the tongue. Divorced from personal feelings, we just slip into public applause of the moment. All the time we try to play upon the feelings of the audience, so as to draw more offerings from their pocket, or tears from their eyes or words of praise for our accomplishment. These are more or less ceremonial prayers, mostly offered on the occasion of *Urs* or anniversary of the birth or death of some saints. Both *Qawwalis* among the Muslims and *Kirtans* among the Hindus fall into this category.

These set prayers are simply the out-pourings of devotees in the past and not the spontaneous emotional outbursts of those who recite them and as such are not likely to be accepted nor do they bear any appreciable fruit, or make any lasting impression on the participants on such occasions, both the singers and the hearers. An arrow that does not take its flight right from the archer's bow-string, strung well down to the chest, hardly hits the target. Similarly, mere oral prayers not coming out of the depths of the soul fail to reach the God-man, who is also the very soul of our soul and is already aware of our needs more than we are ourselves. In the Vedas, the Quran and other scriptures,

we read of community prayers, addressed to God for the benefit of a community, a nation or mankind in general.

12. Congregational Prayers :

The same may be said of congregational prayers which too fall under the above head. These are offered in temples and mosques, churches and synagogues, gurdwaras and other sacred places. The man at the pulpit gives the sermon and the audience mechanically hears it or he reads out and the congregation just repeats the same in a chorus. Except for some honourable exceptions, the rest just walk in for the weekly or monthly service, as the case may be, for form's sake. If such prayers do not create in us a longing for God, they avail nothing. This is the most elementary service that is expected from such prayers and if that too is not achieved, nothing is gained therefrom.

Such services, if conducted on proper lines, can do a lot of good to the people. We may pray in all humility for the welfare of humanity in general, which is a universal cause and dear to God. It is a powerful instrument that has been responsible for building nations and welding together societies.

"O Nanak ! great is His name,
May there be welfare of all under Thy Will
O Lord." —Nanak

Again:

"O God ! put us on the right Path,
Make us steadfast in faith,
Grant us mercy, O Allah,
None is more merciful than Thee." —Quran

"O God ! forgive us our trespasses,
And ignore our high-handedness,
Make us true in Thy Path,
And grant us victory over the unbelievers and the unfaithful." —Quran

The sole object of such prayers is either to ennoble ourselves or to benefit the audience or to tell God of universal sufferings or some needs of the humanity in general or, in the last resort, to ingratiate and push ourselves into public favour by a show of religiosity. Prayers offered and services conducted with the last of these motives are, of course, not only quite useless but definitely harmful and must, therefore, be avoided at all costs.

In Sura Baqar of the Quran, it is stated:

"O God ! if we err either in our endeavours or in practice, do not call Thou us on that account ; but forgive us our shortcomings.

O God ! never put us in to hard trials and never impose on us restrictions and obligations as were ordained in times past.

O God ! do not put a heavy load on us as we may not have the strength to bear.

O God ! forgive us our transgressions and

shower Thy blessings on us, for Thou art our Lord and Master; to whom may we turn except unto Thee. Grant us Thy victory and glory against the unbelievers and the unfaithful."

13. *Place for Prayer:*

For prayers one needs no specific place. It grows best and thrives most on a leavened heart. All that is needed is a quiet place, free from the hubbub of the world or other distracting factors. It may be done within doors or without. Even one's sleeping room can serve the purpose or just a part of it if the whole be not available. In the absence of any place at home, one may walk down to a temple or a mosque, a church or a synagogue for all such places are meant to satisfy this need of the public. If none of these can be near at hand, one can by himself while walking sitting or lying down along a river bank or a mountain side, do *Simran* as ordained by the Master and commune with God and place before Him his inner feelings. Of course the entire world is God's creation and can be used as such.

"This world is the abode of God, and God truly
lives in the world." —Asa M.2

Blessed becomes the place where one sits down to pray. The whole earth is sacred and one may offer his prayer wherever he likes.

"Mosque is the Earth and as holy it is,
Pray ye the faithful when the time comes,

Care not for the place wherever it be."

—Alamsaeen

God has created the whole world and He is the Lord of it all. He does not live in temples and mosques made by human hands. He being spirit, can be worshipped in spirit only.

"God that made the world and all things therein,
seeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth,
dwelleth not in temples made with hands."

—The Acts 17-24

"All is holy where devotion kneels."

—O. W. Holmes

"God is the Master of East and West
Turn whichsoever side thou may,
God shall look thee in the face,
For He prevades in all the space"

—Quran : Al-Bakr

Human body is the temple of God, and it befits man to worship God in the God-made temple in which He resides. We on the contrary run out to man-made temples and mosques outside, to offer our prayers.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God,
and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you.

—Corinthians I : 3-16

"This body is the temple of God (*Hari-Mandir*),
The true pearl of *Jnana* comes to shine in it.

—Parbhati M.3

"Thy mind is the mosque,
Let thou be the worshipper therein.

—A Muslim Divine

God can be best worshipped in the body. One need not wander from place to place like a shuttle-cock. All glory and beauty lies within you. Outside the human body all structures are made of water and clay. The Vedas, the Puranas, the Quran and the Gospel all repeat the same tale.

"The beloved is in the House,
I search Him high and low without.
While the pitcher full of water stands besides,
Woe unto me for wandering athirst."

—A Muslim Divine

"But thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door pray to thy Father which is in Secret, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." —Matt. 6-6

Here a question might arise as to why God who is in the body, is not visible to us. It may be explained that our eyes of flesh can see material things only. They are too gross to behold the Divine Glory of the most subtle. Unless the power of vision comes into conformity with the density of the object, we cannot see the object. It is, therefore, only the Inner Eye that would, when opened, see Him.

"Different are the eyes O Nanak,
That behold the vision of God."

—Maru War M.5

"O remove the scales from my eyes,
And show me the face of the True One."

—Kabir

Again:

"Rise upto the level of God,
Then alone shalt thou see Him."

—Gauri M.5

"When closeth thou the ten outlets of thy body, The light of God shall shine in thee."

—Gauri M.5

"If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." —Matt. 6-22

True prayer consists in withdrawing the spirit within with a pure mind and fully devotional attitude. Such a prayer cannot but bear fruit in abundance and in no time.

14. Pre-requisites in Prayers :

(*i*) *Need of God-Man.* As prayer is to be addressed to someone, it is but necessary that we must first have a firm belief in the existence of the Being to whom we address. We have yet no experience of God and have, therefore, no conception of Him, nor of His powers. Our knowledge of Him, howsoever little as it is, is a secondary one, derived from the study of books or as heard from persons as ignorant of Him as we are. In a state like this, we can contemplate nothing. But there may be a person who may have a direct knowledge of God

and be inwardly in tune with the Infinite. There is a peculiar charm in his company. His weighty words of wisdom at once sink deep into the mind. His utterances charged with His Power, have a magnetic influence. One feels a kind of serenity and an inward calm in his holy presence. He does not reason of God. He simply talks of Him with authority, because he has a first-hand knowledge of Him and consciously lives in Him every moment of his life. Such a person may be termed a Prophet, a Messiah, or a God-Man. Gospel tells us that God speaks through His prophets or the chosen ones. It is but a natural thing. Man alone can be a teacher of man, and for God's science we must have some God-man to teach us that. *Sant Satguru* is the pole from where God's light is reflected. From him alone we can know of the Path leading to God and he can be a sure guide who can be depended upon, in weal or woe, both here and hereafter.

"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father... Belive me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me". —St. John 14:9-11

From what has been said above, it naturally follows that God-man or *Sant Satguru* is the right person to be approached in the first instance and to whom all our prayers should be addressed. Faith is the keynote of success in all our endeavours. We must then have firm and full faith in the competency of the Master.

With love and humility we must make an approach to him if we want to make a beginning in Science Spiritual. We must pray to him sincerely from the depth of our heart. We should think it fortunate indeed, if in his Grace he accepts us for imparting knowledge of *Paravidya*—the Science of Self-knowledge and God-knowledge which in fact is the seed-knowledge from which all knowledge springs.

(*ii*) *Complete Absorption:* The next essential in this connection is complete absorption. While offering prayer, we must forget everything else including our body and our bodily relations. Singleness of purpose is a *sine qua non* for hitting the target. It is a common knowledge that one cannot serve two Masters at one and the same time. We have to choose between God and Mammon and then forget the other. One by one we have to slip through the various sheaths enveloping the soul like funeral shrouds in their folds. The spirit is a living entity and cannot move ahead unless it discards the material appendages in which it is wrapped up—physical, mental and causal. By complete absorption, these drop off one by one, of their own accord, leaving the spirit free for flights in the spiritual regions. Mohammedans call this absorption *'Fana-fil-Sheikh'*, which ultimately leads to *'Fana-fil-Allah'*, thus completing the journey from *Fana* to *Baqa* (from death to immortality).

(*iii*) *Truthfulness and Contentment:* Our prayers can be fruitful only when we are true to ourselves in all the aspects of life. We must have right thoughts, right aspirations, right contemplation, right livelihood and right conduct. Purity in thought, word and deed must precede everything else. Righteousness, chastity and truthfulness are all closely associated with and actually spring from *Brahmcharya* which is a great motor force in life. It is on the bed-rock of *Brahmcharaya* that all these things grow and bear fruit.

Contentment is an active aid in controlling the wandering faculties of the mind. Unless mental oscillations stop and stillness is achieved we cannot offer a true and sincere prayer. A stilled mind alone can reflect God's light when it may dawn.

"God is attracted swift and sure,
With prayer from mind contented and pure."

—Ramkali M.I

"To thine ownself be true and then it must follow, as night the day, thou cans't not be false to any man".

—William Shakespeare

(*iv*) *Sincere and stirring sensation:* Prayer must arise from the depths of the soul. It should not be a vain repetition of empty words with little meaning in them. What we pray for, we must really wish for, not only intellectually but

from the very bottom of our being. It must churn the very soul to its depths and the music of prayer should come out and tingle from the very nerves, tissues and fibres of the entire frame making us unmindful and oblivious of everything else beside the sweet music of the soul.

"O Kabir ! why to the minaret goest the *Imam*
for a call, for God is not deaf,
Why not address thy call to the mind so that it
goeth within." —Salok Kabir

(*v*) *Spontaneity*: A prayer being the cry of the soul in agony is most beautiful and most natural when it gushes forth spontaneously like a spring of cool water from the bowels of the Earth. It needs no embellishments of particular words and peculiar phrases. On the contrary, such adornments mar the true beauty of free expression and very frequently, the man of prayer is imperceptibly drawn in and imprisoned in the net of verbiage. All this makes a prayer artificial—a product of deliberate art divorced from feelings. Such prayers make us false to ourselves and are not at all beneficial. God is concerned with genuine emotions expressed in howsoever simple words and not with set speeches, vain repetitions, ostentatious phraseology and learned expostulations.

Maulana Rumi has given us a beautiful illustration of a loving prayer that a simple and

unsophisticated shepherd-boy was muttering in his own humble way as prophet Moses passed by him. He was addressing : "O God ! where art Thou ? I would like to serve Thee. I would knit for Thee woolen garments and comb Thy hair. I would like to serve Thee with milk, curd, cheese and clarified butter, tend Thee in Thy illness, kiss Thy hands and massage Thy feet. I would like to make a sacrifice of all my sheep and goats for Thy sake." These words of the shepherd-boy sounded as heresy to the prophet, who in a rage began to reprimand the boy saying : "Shut up your mouth, O infidel. Why are you talking like a fool ? Withdraw your insolent words or else God would curse us with hell-fires for your blasphemy. God is not a human being and He does not stand in need of any of the things that you want to offer to Him. He is a spirit, without any hands and feet and you have insulted Him with your idle talk." Stung to the quick, the simple-hearted boy tore his clothes, ran to the wilderness, wept bitterly for having incurred the displeasure of God. In the intensity of his agony, he lost his concious-ness and behold, he saw within him the Light of God and heard a sweet and kind voice, assuring him that all his prayers, sincere as they were, were acceptable to God and He was greatly pleased with him for his offerings. On the other hand, when Moses went into his wonted

meditation, he felt that God was sorely vexed with him for having driven a loving soul away from Him and reprimanding him,—

"You came into the world for uniting people
 unto Me,
And not for separating those who were one
 with Me."

Spake thus :

"Every one remembers me in his own words and according to his own inner feelings. I have accepted all that the shepherd-boy offered me spontaneously in his innocent and unpolished words as they may appear to you, but I am highly displeased with you for having driven him from his communing with Me. I am not affected by words alone, for whatever they be, they do not, in any way, sanctify Me, far from it they purify the heart of him who utters them. I see not to the glossy words but to the heart and the inner sincerity that lies therein behind the words, for it is from the abundance of heart that a man speaks, no matter in what broken and uncouth words one may give expression to one's feelings. O Moses ! there is a world of difference between the learned entangled in the etiquette of polished speech and the love-stricken hearts that give vent to what is within them, the withered soul in the waste-land of the heart, lost to all sense

of decency and decorum as you would like to call. Don't you know that even the Government does not impose any land revenue on a land that is *Banjar* or a waste. A martyr in God needs thy care and attention. The religion of love is quite different from the religion of set formulism and ritual and for the lovers there is no religion higher than that of God Himself. A jewel remains a jewel even if it has no hall-mark on it."

When Moses heard these words, he felt terrified and went to the jungle, found out the shepherd-boy and said, "I have brought for you happy tidings. God has accepted all your prayer and your seemingly heretic words are as good as those of a devout and your devotion is the light of your body. Whatever comes to you from within, utter without any fear." The boy replied smilingly, "O Moses, I have now far transcended all the barriers of the flesh. Your rebuke was enough to bring in me a great change. Now I know the Great One and my condition is such which no words can portray."

15. Time for Prayer :

Prayer needs no specific time nor any particular hour. In fact, one can pray without ceasing. It is an ebullition of spirit and like a volcano may burst at any moment. Prayer should, however, be offered regularly at any time during the day or night. Early morning

hours and evening twilight hours are, of course, very congenial and most suitable.

"At the ambrosial hour of the early dawn,
Be ye in communion with the Divine Word,
And mediate on His glory." —Jap Ji

Most of us search for a time for prayer and unfortunately are so busy that in the end, we find no time at all. A prayer does not need any philosophic dissertation or elaborate arrangement. In loving faith, one has just to express his inner urge in the simplest words possible. A true prayer needs no particular time and place. We have to sit quietly in the temple of the body, at the seat of the soul and to gaze in between the eye-brows and mentally repeat whatever charged words have been given to us by the Master. That is more than enough of a prayer. But the trouble with us is that we do not know how to pray. We may, in a case like this, simply ask, "O Lord ! teach us how to pray." In this respect, we can be guided by the specimens of prayers given by the various Masters.

16. Occasion for Prayer :

We generally pray when we are in distress and trouble but when we escape therefrom, we begin thinking that we wrought liberation by our own efforts and thereafter do not feel the need for prayer. We must guard against such serious pitfalls. Prayer, in fact, is needed at

every step. When in difficulty, we must pray to estape therefrom. In distress, when all else fail, the thought of the Omnipotent Father gives a solace to the mind. When success be in sight, then pray that you may not get elated and puffed up and ask for God's Grace and bounty for without these we can never succeed. After the fulfilment of our desires, or riddance from difficulties, we must render thanks to the Almighty for His favours. When God is the the loving Father and without Him we cannot do at all, prayer must become a part of our very being.

17. Prayer and Sin :

A mere confession of sins and shortcomings in prayer does not avail anything. If we think that by mere confession our sins can be washed off and we can once again indulge in them freely we are in the wrong. Such an attitude far from being a saving force keeps us perpetually down in sins. Redemption is the gift that comes either from God or God-Man who specifically comes for the benefit of sinners. Our job is just to understand his commandments and to keep them scrupulously, leaving the rest to him.

"How may one know the Truth and break
through the cloud of falsehood ?
There is a Way, O Nanak ; To make His Will
our own.
His Will which is already wrought in our
existence." —Jap Ji

Every action has a reaction. Every act of omission or commission has an appropriate penalty. We cannot escape from sin as long as we consider ourselves as born of the flesh, for flesh is the root cause of all evils in the world. Until a spirit learns to leave off the sensual plane at will, enjoyments and distractions do thrive like a Bay tree.

"Too much of indulgence means distress,
Enjoyments lead ultimately to disease.
Pleasures cannot chase away pain,
Without His acceptance one wanders in wilderness." —Maru M.I

God is all love. To think that it is because of our forgiveness that He forgives us for trespasses or else He would not do so, is to misunderstand Him and make a misuse of prayers as means for doing more wrongs.

The man of God on the other hand has a twofold plan of Dispensation. While granting forgiveness for faults on the one hand he remonstrates severely against repetition. Thus far and no further" is his admonition. "Go and sin no more" was a familiar phrase with Christ when he used to forgive the sinners. In this way he works out his purificatory process and the spirit would be chiselled into shape and form that may be acceptable to God.

Prayer *per se* cannot alter His Law of Dispensation nor help to reach Him. It is only

the loving devotion and intense longing for God and strict obedience to the commandments of the God-man that go to make a prayer as means leading God-wards. Love and not loud prayers, is the corner-stone of God's Law of Redemption.

If we lovingly depend upon the strong arm of the God-man, his Grace would spontaneously gush out from the fountain of love in him. "Reciprocity in love" is proverbial indeed and there is no limit to his saving Grace. Even the penalty that he imposes is tinted with rays of love, with no trace of rancour in it.

18. *Prayers for Others* :

Since all souls are of the same essence as of God and are co-related with each other, one may as well pray for the benefit of others. High souls always pray for the good of the entire humanity. They are not content with the greatest good of the greatest number as is commonly believed by the leaders of the society. Their prayers generally end with the words— 'O God, do good unto all.'

The Muslims first pray for the *Momins* (their brethren in Faith) and thereafter for all the rest. The Buddhists likewise pray for all. Christ even suggested prayers for one's enemies. Amongst the Hindus it is a common practice to close their prayers with a few charitable words for all living creatures, great and small. Some people offer prayers for the ills of the entire

humanity and still some make use of it in the case of individual ailments. Telepathy has now conclusively proved how heart-strings between individuals play in unison, irrespective of distance between the two. There is a tremendous power in thought vibrations and their range too is unlimited. Is not the coming into being of the countless universes and their dissolution the result of some thought-force ? If we may be permitted to use the phrase as indicative of God's Will, no matter how we may call it—*Kalma, Word, Hukam,* or *Bhana*. Thus the sympathetic chords between the Master and the disciples carry silent messages of love to and fro between them with a force that is unimaginable. This wonderful relationship one can establish with God. By being in tune with the Infinite, one can by force of thought do a lot of good to others, as at bottom all are embedded in the same soil—the Divine ground.

19. Acceptance of Prayers :

It is a common experience that most of our prayers get no response. The reason for this is not far to seek. We have not yet learnt the Will of God and how that Will works entirely for our benefit. In our ignorance we very often pray for things that in the long run are likely to do more harm than good, and no wonder that the loving Father in His boundless compassion for us does not accept such prayers and they

bear no fruit, or else we will never be able to escape from sensual enjoyments.

"Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss that ye may consume it upon your lusts."

Again :

"We ignorant of ourselves,
Beg often our own harms, which the wise
powers
Deny us for our good ; so find we profit
By losing of our prayers."

—William Shakespeare

George Meredith tells us to remember,—

"That he who rises from prayer a better man,
his prayer alone is answered."

Again, we generally pray to God for miracles and no wonder such prayers are not granted.

"Whatever a man prays for, he prays for a
miracle.
Every prayer reduces itself to this ; "Great God,
grant that twice two be not four."

—Ivan S. Turgeniev

All the time we are living a sensual life and have not yet known that there is another side of the picture as well—life beyond the senses. Most of our prayers are, therefore, of a temporal nature and if the same are granted without any exception, we would naturally sink lower and lower in the scale of moral values and our sins increase more and more day by day and there would hardly be a chance to get out of this

prison-house; first of the world and then of the body and bodily enjoyments, with the result that we shall forever remain an exile from the kingdom of God—a Lost Province with no hope for re-union.

When a disciple remembers the Master, he experiences within him, a soothing influence and a sort of Divine Intoxication. This is known as telepathy or sympathetic communication from heart to heart from a distance. In the same way, we can by tuning our attention with the Infinite, draw upon the great reservoir of God-Power and utilise that for the beneficent good of others. For this purpose, one has to unite his self in the Divine ground wherein all are embedded and from there pass on the heavenly influence to the individual or society desired to be benefited. In this attitude one has not to place the desires of others before the Creator, but has simply to invoke His loving pleasure and await His Grace to work out the desired result.

"If Radio's slim fingers can pluck a melody
From night, and toss it over a continent or sea
Why should mortals wonder if God hears
prayer."

—Ethil Roming Fuller

But man is just a part of the creation and each individual but an infinitesimal speck therein. Gifted as we are with a limited vision, we do not know and understand that Grand Plan,

the "Mighty Maze" as Alexander Pope the Laureate of peace puts it. It is indeed too much for the "presumptuous man...so weak, so little, and so blind," a tiny part in the vast machinery of His creation. Again, the great poet tells us:

"Heaven from all creatures hides the book of
fate,
All but the page prescribed, their present
state...
All Nature is but art, unknown to thee ;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see ;
All discord, harmony not understood ;
All Partial evil, universal good.
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
The Truth is clear, "Whatever is, is right"...
Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is Man.
Chaos of Thought and Passion all confused ;...
Great Lord of all things, yet a prey to all,
Sole judge of Truth, in endless Error hurled:"

Each one, therefore, from his narrow angle of vision prays for a thing and knows not how the same will fit in or not in the Cosmic Order. In the hot and sultry months, for example, people living in towns pray for a refreshing shower, while in the rural areas, peasants would at the same time ask for more of sunshine and heat for ripening of their corn.

Man looks not beyond his nose. He does not even know what is good for him. Often he

asks for things which when granted become a veritable source of nuisance to him and with much regret he has to retrace his steps. The story of the 'Golden Touch' is significant in this connection. King Midas after much longing and prayers got the boon of converting everything he touched into gold. After a few moments of happiness, he realised his mistake. The fcod he put into his mouth turned into a lump of gold. The water as it touched his lips solidified into gold. His only daughter as she came running and embraced him became a statue of gold. As he went to the soft bed he found himself instead on hard metallic cushions.

God or God-man knows best both our past and the future like an open book. He would never grant such prayers as are ultimately baneful to us. How can the loving Father give to a child that which may prove a poison to him. A Persian poet says :

"My God is more anxious than myself to fulfil
 my needs,
All my endeavours in this behalf are but tortuous deeds."

One need pray to God for such gifts as He may consider beneficial.

"O God I know not what is good for me, for I am immersed head and ears into the maze of the world." —Jaitsari Ravidas

Khawja Nizami prayeth;

"O God ! Thou alone art my well-wisher. Show me the way, whereby I may win Thy Grace and attain salvation."

In the Holy Quran also it is stated that people ought to pray for that which may be useful both in this world and in the next.

20. Need for Prayer:

We cannot win God either by flattery or by vain repetitions, nor does He stand to gain or lose anything whether we offer prayers or not. Compassionate as He is, His Grace is always at work in each and all alike for we cannot live without it. We can, however, attract that Grace to our advantage by becoming a fit receptacle for it Humility and faith, purify the mind and make it a fitting instrument for God's Grace. These two aids help in inverting the lotus of the mind which, at present, is attuned with the senses. Unless we are able to turn its direction upwards, God's Grace cannot directly flow into it. Prayers, humble and sincere, help in establishing a harmony between man's mind and God's Grace. He needs no forensic arguments and legal acumen in defence of our deeds and needs. All that is required is a loving and a pure heart attuned to His Grace and the latter is automatically attracted to it.

God is all Love and we cannot ask Him to be more loving. He is Omniscient (All-Knowing) and we cannot, by loud and strong prayers,

make Him any the wiser in this behalf. Perfection cannot be made more perfect, by our protestations and prayers. We must learn to 'stand and wait' as the classic poet Milton puts it, and His Grace shall, of its own, be attracted and flood our very being.

"...God doth not need
Either man's work or His own gifts, who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best, His state
Is kingly. Thousands at His bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest :
They also serve, who only stand and wait."

—John Milton

God is an unchangeable permanence and eternally the same:

"Truth was when there was naught,
Truth was in the beginning of time,
Truth is ever the same even now,
Truth shall remain forever and forever." —Jap Ji

"Eternity is (ever) in love with the productions of time." —W. B. Yeates

The way to God's Grace lies not in striving and crying. It is enough for man to wait silently as a receptacle for Divine breath which bloweth where it listeth. It is merely by waiting and trusting that one arrives at the ultimate Truth, which cannot be apprehended at all except as it is focussed upon the soul of man. Here lies the advantage of prayer which moulds

out a correct attitude for approach to the Divine Will.

"Wheresoever I turn my face, Thou art there,
Why should I pray to anyone else, when I see
Thou art there to listen to my prayer, O Lord.
—Gauri M.5

Man's only duty is to be ever grateful to God for His innumerable gifts and blessings. On the contrary, we become so infatuated by them that we not only lose Him, but lose our own self also in the plenitude of His bounties and, more often than not, are carried off our feet by the whirlwind of desires.

"We get attached to the gifts, forgetting the bountiful Lord.
For we have forgotten that we have to die some day." —Dhansari M.5

21. *The advantages of Prayer :*

Prayer is the essence of spirituality. It affords a wonderful recreation to the body, mind and soul. It brings in complete satisfaction and satiation which nothing else can give. The peace which comes with prayer is of a unique nature, quite unimaginable. A kind of serenity descends upon the subliminal self within.

Prayer has in it a great dynamic force. It strengthens and befits a person to face and fight the battle of life fearlessly and successfully. It is in fact the only panacea for all types of ills :

Adhi Bhoutak (diseases and ailments), *Adhi Devak* (accidental over which man has no control), and *Adhi Atmic* (evil prospensities of the mind) and above all brings in inner peace and satiety. It buckles a person with courage and fortitude and brings about a complete reorientation.

Prayer is the key that unlocks the Kingdom of Heaven. It pulls up the sluice-gates and releases from within immense power and unique resourcefulness.

"Where all human efforts fail, there the prayer succeeds."

Lord Tennyson tells us,—

"...More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

Even if prayer may apparently seem to fail to avert an ill-fated calamity, yet it has the power to take the sting out of it. With an inner transformation, there comes a change in the angle of vision which, in its turn, greatly affects the outlook on life. Every thing wears on a new mantle and appears in colours superbly Divine.

Last, but not the least, prayer opens our eyes to the Reality and enables us to see things in their true perspective. It gives new values to life, and gradually transports an individual into a New World and initiates him to a New Order. With a life of prayer, a person eventually rises into Cosmic Awareness. and sees the

Hidden Hand of God working out His Will and His Purpose which otherwise remain a sealed book, too subtle for an average man to pierce through and peep into. The more this inner contact is established, the more of God-head is imbibed by the spirit. Only when a complete identification comes about, then only one becomes a conscious co-worker with Him.

22. *Gradations in Prayer :*

In course of time, an aspirant begins to feel more and more the need for spiritual uplift than for merely physical comforts. In *Birhadaranyaka Upnishad*, we have a prayer like,—

"From unreal lead me to the real, from darkness lead me to light and from death lead me to immortality."

As soon as an aspirant begins to have an inner experience, all worldly enjoyments lose their charm. Having had an experience, howsoever little, of the Unchangeable Permanence, he now finds no pleasure in the ever-changing objects of the world, subject as they are to gradual decay, disintegration and ultimate dissolution. He no more asks for physical comforts.

"What shall I pray for, when nothing is permanent." —Dhanasari Kabir

The whole world is slavishly mad after the Epicurean principle—"Eat, drink and be merry." None has time to think of God and the inner self. But nothing in the world holds out any

attraction for a true aspirant. He makes the best use of whatever comes in his way and works but to satisfy the bare needs of his body and spends the rest of his time in *Sadhana* (spiritual discipline) so as to derive the greatest benefit for his soul.

"For times without number have I drunk life
to the lees.
Without Thy Saving Grace, O Lord! Nanak hath
no release. —Gauri M.5

Hereafter the aspirant lives just for the manifestation of God-head within himself and to sing glory of His name.

"Let the lotus feet of the Master rest in the
heart,
Let the tongue repeat His Holy Word,
To live a life of constant remembrance nurture
ye this living temple of the Lord."
—Bihagra War M.5

While on this Path, the pilgrim traveller realises his ignorance and knowing his incapacity, extends to God, his hands in prayer:

"O Lord! make me swim safely to the other
shore,
I know not swimming, extend to me Thy hand
of help. —Gond Namdev

As his angle of vision changes, so does the nature of his prayer. To start with, a person prays for the fulfilment of his physical needs; but when one starts on the spiritual Path, he

prays for the removal of such obstacles as come in his way, e.g. sense-turmoil, mental chattering, ingrained karmic impressions.

This period is most critical in the life of a *Sadhak*. Until actual self-realisation, he is in a state of perpetual restlessness tossing between the starboard and the larboard. Neither does he wholly belong to the world nor does he belong to God. While in the eyes of worldly people, he is a man of piety, yet in the heart of his heart he knows he is full of iniquities.

"Farid the sinful is still robed in black,
Though the people address him as *Darvesh*."
—Farid Sahib

In this state of uncertainty, the *Sadhak*, at times, tries to snap away and escape from the struggle; but after a time the inner urge once again comes upon him and he takes courage and starts God-ward.

"Should a traveller while travelling fall down,
There is nothing to wonder and cavil at.
O Kabir! one who sits and start not on the journey,
Has an immeasurable distance yet to traverse."

But until a person is able to subdue his senses and sensory organs, and rids the mind of oscillations, the kindly Light of God does not dawn upon him.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." —Matt. 5 : 1-12

"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall
be full of light." —Matt. 6-22

"He who controls his ten organs,
Heaven's Light dawns within him."
—Gauri M.5

The wiles of the mind are both very subtle and risky. It often lies in ambush and makes its inroads when least expected. The ingrained evil propensities, though invisible, are very strong and time and again they come to the surface to deliver more blows which quite often prove fatal. The coil strikes out like lightening with such sharp and sudden twists and turns that man by himself becomes helpless in its clutches. Here comes in the need for the strong and the long arm of the Master which stretches forth with equal agility to his rescue:

"Subdue the mind with the Power of the Master." —Swami Shiv Dayal Singh

"Mind cannot come to rest unless it is overshadowed by the power of the Master."
—Maulana Rumi

"By constant thought of the Master,
The sleeping mind comes to its own."
—Suhi M.4

23. *What to Ask from God :*

A lady on marriage entrusts her all to her husband and glady accepts the new mode of life whatever it be. Now nothing else appeals to her but him. It is for the husband now to

provide all her needs and to look after her comforts.

"Render unto Him all that belongs to Him,
And make His Will thine own.
In return He showers His blessings manifold,
O Nanak ! He is ever so merciful."

—Gauri M.5

"He who has Him as his boon companion,
He stands in need of naught."

—Gauri M.5

Once a certain king intended to go abroad. He inquired of his queens as to what gift each of them would like him to bring for them from the foreign lands. One of them asked for costly jewels, another for rich apparel and still another for cosmetics. Some asked for fineries and others for delicacies etc. The youngest of them who loved the king most requested for his early return so that she may not have to languish long in his absence. The king on his return, sent the various gifts to his other queens and himself went to the palace of the youngest and was highly pleased that there was someone who loved him the most, much more than his riches and wealth. The *Rani* (queen) too thanked God on her right good fortune that her husband was with her and that she needed nothing else besides him. The rest of the queens, though each one of them had got what she wanted, had not the good fortune to claim her husband's

attention. All their riches and gifts availed them not without their beloved.

In exactly the same way we, through short-sightedness, ask from God or God-man for trinkets of no consequence and not Him and His Saving Grace and like the different queens in the parable, suffer most the pangs of separation. All the riches of the world fail to give the least satisfaction. On the contrary, these things distract us from the Truth and make us more miserable. If we could but win His Grace we would then be in want no more. All His riches come to us automatically without asking. Even if the latter are denied for one reason or another, it matters not, for without Him and His love, they are a dirty trash.

"All riches and fineries befit him who has won
Him,"
And even without them, what cares if he were
to live in poverty." —Shalok M.5

Our most elementary needs are of the body—to wit food, clothing and shelter. For these things we strive hard day and night restlessly, nay madly do we work from morn till night, sacrificing our very self in procuring these comforts—if at all any comfort do these things provide. Do we realise that when a child comes into the world, his life-plan is sketched out before-hand. Without this nobody would come here at all. With destiny all shaped, the mould

is cast and the spirit enters therein, ready to take the life's journey in the world.

"With a predestined plan, one comes into the
world,
O Tulsi! with all this, the mind does not
accept it."

The Dame Nature now gets ready for the right royal reception of the Prince of the Universe, providing milk in the mother's breast, shelter in the mother's lap and an army of attendants to attend to his minutest needs. The Powers of Nature mobilise all their forces to claim the prince-child as their own. But as the child grows and develops into adolescence and begins to feel the life-impulse surging in him, the world, as a foster-mother, claims him as her own and he fondly clings to her and her gifts forgetting his native and pre-natal home in heaven.

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy,
Shades of the prison-house begin to close upon
the growing boy.
Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearning she hath in her own natural kind,
And even with something of a mother's mind,
and no unworthy aim,
The homely nurse doth all she can,
To make her foster-child her inmate Man, forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came."

—Wordsworth

Again all the gifts of the world are purely of an ephemeral nature. They are always in an unstable and a changing state. Nothing is permanent. Everything is subject to decay and dissolution.

"Momentarily the things appear and then recede
back into the Fullness,
In the twinkling of an eye, the world itself sinks
into the great deep." —Gauri Kabir

In this ever-changing phenomena of the world, there is but an unchangeable permanence and that is God and God-in-action (the Holy Ghost, the *Kalma*, the *Naam* or the Word), responsible for the creation, sustenance and dissolution of countless universes. Why not then should we long for, ask for and pray for that imperishable life-principle so that we too may have 'Life Ever-lasting' and come to our eternal heritage and ever-lasting God-hood which is our birth-right.

"Listen ye to the call of the hollow man, manifest Thyself, O Lord,
Nanak has humbly reached Thy door, through
the Grace of Thy devotee." —Gauri M.5

Our native home is in *Sachkhand*. Ages upon ages have gone by that we parted from the Father and are still in exile in this world,—

"The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar." —Wordsworth

We must then yearn for a re-union with the Beloved, separated as we are from Him for myriads of ages.

"For ages upon ages have we been separated,
Unite us unto Thee, O Lord through sheer compassion if Thou wilt.
We have wandered high and low in all the points of the compass,
Now keep us O Thou under the shadow of Thy holy wings." —Majh M.5

"In countless births have I wandered away and away from Thee,
This (human) birth I have dedicated to Thee and have staked it on Thee,
Ravidas now lives in the hope to meet Thee once again. —Dhanasari Ravidas

Guru Amardas, therefore, prayeth :

"Through innumerable gyres have I gone without rest,
In Thy mercy, O Merciful ! grant me the boon of Thy manifestation." —Dhanasari M.3

Guru Arjan prayeth :

"Many a birth I had in various species,
Every time I had to undergo many sufferings.
Through Thy Grace I have now a human birth,
This then is the time to manifest Thyself unto me, O Lord." —Gauri M.5

"Lift me O Lord ! I have fallen at Thy door,
Accept me in compassion, tired as I am of my wanderings.

Saviour of Thy devotees, save the sinners as well,
I know none besides Thee to offer my prayers,
O ferry me safely across the ocean of living matter."

—Jaitsari M.5

The soul pines in the separation of of her Lord. Even if she is not worthy of the Lord, she prays for union with Him.

"All are blessed in the love of their Lord,
But I alone am the unfortunate one.
So filled with spots through and through,
My consort does not like even to see my face."

—Suhi War M.3

"Meritless as I am, I intensely pray for my turn, O Nanak,
All the spouses had Thee in abundance, spare a night for me as well."

—War Ramkali M.3

"All the maidens have gone with their spouses,
Whereto should I, the unfortunate, turn my face ?
With my parents I was the light of their eyes,
But woe unto me that my Lord looks not at me."

—Vadhans M.3

"Kill me if Thou wilt but turn not away,
Hug me to Thy bosom, listen ye to my prayer,
Just look this way and earn my gratitude,
Why kill me by turning Thy face away."

—Asa Kabir

"Thirsty as I am for Thy sight,
My mind calls for Thee in agony,

I pray to Thee O Formless and crave for Thy mercy. —Asa M.5

"Life is worth living with Thee before me,
Be merciful, O sweetly Beloved,
And drive away all doubts and delusions."

—Sarang M.5

"I earnestly beseech and pray for just one thing,
I make a sacrifice of all my wealth and possessions for a union with Thee."

—Bilawal M.5

"What may I ask for and repeat unto Thee except,
That I hunger and thirst for Thy sight,
It is through the Word of the Master that one reaches Truth,
Nanak, therefore, prays for this alone."

—Suhi M.1

"I have just one submission and listen ye to that,
Certainly Thou art great, compassionate, and immaculate. —Tilang M.1

"We never remember Thee and waste our life in fruitless pursuits,
Nanak sayeth, O God, remember Thou the pledge (of redemption), regardless of our defaults. —Sorath M.5

"Thou art the abode of all virtues and Lord of us all with no virtue in us,
No bondsman can praise Thee enough, when he holds even his body and life from Thee."

"Thou saved me from the hell-fires, I have taken shelter at Thy feet,
Thou art the only stake of my life and honour, I depend on naught else." —Suhi M.5

"Great is the Lord, Boundless, Infinite and Ineffable,
O Nanak! He is the Saviour of all who take refuge in Him." —Jaitsari M.5

"I pray to Thee, O Lord! of body, mind and soul,
O Nanak! it is His greatness, else none knew me before." —Asa M.5

"Thou alone art the Doer of all things,
To whom then should we offer prayers."
—Bhairon M.1

"Helpless are we and Merciful art Thou,
What can we, the sinners, say unto Thee.
Inspite of our broken words of no meaning,
Accept us and grant us the gift of perfection."
—Dhanasari Ravidas

"Thou art the woof and warp of my very existence,
I, therefore, pray unto Thee alone.
I have no other place to turn to for worship,
I place all my comfort and discomforts before Thee." —Suhi M.4

"I cannot do justice to Thy greatness,
For I am an ignorant fool.
O Lord! redeem poor Nanak,
For he has taken shelter at Thy feet.
—Suhi M.4

Again, we have in the Sikh Scriptures :

"We, the ignorant, insensate and devoid of all virtues, have taken refuge with Thee, O Primal Being,
Through Thy boundless Grace, O Lord! save us, in spite of all our shortcomings."

—Bilawal M.4

"O God! have mercy and ferry us across,
Save us with the help of Thy Melodious Song.
We are bogged in the mire of infatuation,
O extend to us Thy hand and pull us out."

—Asa M.4

"Look ye not on my merits and demerits,
But forgive me my faults, O Merciful.
How can the clay-toy be washed clean,
That indeed is the fate of all human beings."

—Ramkali M.5

"O Lord! be Thou compassionate on the orphan at Thy door,
Sustain him in the blind well of the body,
For he is imbecile both in mind and intellect."

—Gauri M 5

"We are the great defaulters and sinners with a galaxy of thefts to boot,
Now Nanak is at Thy feet, O Lord! save him as Thou wilt."

—Gauri M.5

"O Saviour and Sustainer Peerless, listen ye to me,
O Nanak! the ignorant and the foolish never think of Him.

Nor do they know the pitch-dark night in which they live." —Tokhari M.1

"I have no virtues of the body or of the mind, and have come from afar,
I have neither riches nor beauty, save me the homeless one." —Gauri M.5

"One who slips at every step cannot escape on his own account,
O Nanak! He may forgive and pilot me across in His Divine Mercy." —Gauri M.5

"We commit blunders without number, and know not their consequences,
O Lord! forgive us in Thy Grace for we are inveterate sinners." —Shalok M.3

"Like the great deep sea, we are full of faults,
With Thy mercy and Saving Grace, Thou can save the mill-stones from sinking down.

—Gauri M.1

The whole world is in the throes of death pangs. God alone can save it, as He may with His limitless love.

"The entire world is being consumed in the invisible flames of hell-fire,
Save us all with Thy loving Grace in whatever way it may be possible."

—Bilawal War M.3

"O Lord! Thou art peerlessely deep and infinitely high and none reaches Thee,
We pray that we may not forget Thee, the fountain of all comforts." —Suhi M.5

"O the Great Giver and perfect Master,
I ask of Thee but one gift, the gift of *Hari*.
Shower Thy blessing on Nanak,
O my oldest Friend, become manifest in me.
—Kalyan M.4

Good and evil intentions are both in your control, O Lord. We are but instruments and you are the motor-power behind us. We only act and do as you actuate us from behind.

"All our thoughts and good intentions are in Thy control,
Thou alone art the motor-power behind all our actions,
O Nanak! He is the over-ruling power that works as He Wills." —Bilawal M.4

We, *per se* are incapable of rendering any service to God, and cannot pride on our so called service. It is in the refulgence of God's Light that we live and have our very being. When He withdraws the life-current, we become helpless,—

"None can serve Thee nor can feel elated at something.
When the life-currents are withdrawn, how helpless do we become. —Bilawal M.3

We must ask for God from God for all else means inviting headache. The greatest gift from Him is that of *Naam* or the Power of Godhead, which, when granted, brings with it contentment and satisfaction.

"Except Thee, all else is the source of troubles
and misery,
Grant us the gift of Thy Word that brings
in peace and satiation. —Ramkali M.5

Maulana Rumi prayeth in this wise,—

Ask from God nothing but God,
Except Him, all else is perishable.
Never ask God for a thing that must decay,
Ask not of God anything beside Himself.
Do not darken thy mind with thoughts and
cares that are chimerical."

(i) Ask for God :

One may invoke for help in crucial moments of his life from God or from a God-man, for he alone can rescue him from such slippery moments.

"Full of the deadly sins and tormented by lusts
of the flesh I cry,
Rescue me by Thy Grace, as best as Thou may.
O Great and Compassionate One ! I am at Thy
mercy,
With austerities and penances, one cannot
escape,
But with Thy glance of Grace, take Nanak, out
of the blind well." —Kanra M.5

"O Lord ! save me,
I am incapable of doing anything,
In Thy mercy, grant me the gift of *Naam*."
—Dhanasari M.5

"I pray to the Guru, the beloved of God,
A filthy worm am I, O grant me the light of
Naam." —Gujri M.4

Mind can be controlled only by the *Dhun* of *Naam* or the Celestial strains of music and it is for this that one has to pray for. No other type of Yoga, to wit, *Jnana, Hath, Karam*, etc. can be of any avail in this connection ; nor has anyone been able to escape from the clutches of the mind with all his wits about him. One may tame the wild mind only through the practice of *Sat-Shabd* or *Naam* (the True Word) and one can have initiation to this practice from some adept in the line. The moment it comes into contact with *Naam*, the mind gets docile and instead of being an arch traitor as hitherto, it turns into a positive ally and helps the spirit in its onward march on the Spiritual Path.

"Oh I have got the treasure of *Hari Naam*,
My mind now wanders not but is in eternal
rest." —Basant M.9

"Listening to the *Dhun*, the mind gets stilled,
None of the myriad of ways can work this
miracle.
The yogin practises yogic exercises,
The Jnani is immersed in Jnana.
The hermit tires himself out in lone solitude,
The anchorite does endless austerities.
Those who meditate on the mental patterns,
They too suffer from a great delusion.

Learning and knowledge are of not much avail,
For the wise in the end have to rue their wisdom.
The Pandit engages in the recitation of the Vedas
But all his sacred lore fails to take him any the nearer to God.
No other means are of any consequence whatever,
The only beneficial way is that of *Shabd*.
When a Master of the Sound-Current appears on the scene,
The disciple too beings to feel the yearning of the new birth.
With the practice of the *surat-shabd yoga*,
The mind stuff gradually gets to sink within itself till nothing remains."

—Sar Bachan: 216

When once this contact with *Naam* is established, the *Sadhak* always feels the presence of the Higher Power and the latter forever remain with him, no matter wherever he be—on the snowy mountain-tops or in the burning desert-sands. Revelling in the greatness of that Power he leaves all his cares to Him and and becomes indifferent to everything around him. He cheerfully accepts whatever comes in his way as coming from Him, for his benefit alone. He consciously sees the Divine Will at work and smilingly surrenders himself to the same with genuine words of gratitude on his lips. He has

no longer any wishes and desires of his own except what may be of God's. Now he works as a mere instrument moving like an automaton under the influence of that Power. He sees all creatures, high and low, just as tiny specks set in an orderly harmony in the immense universe surrounding him. He now divines a procession which is orderly, an order which is harmonious obeying a Will infinitely above him and yet infintesimally careful of him. In this way is established a complete harmony between the soul of man and the soul of the universe. At every step, he cries forth, Let thy Will be done:

"All the creatures : highest to the lowest,
  are at Thy mercy, and Thou carest for them:
  one and all.
Whatever pleaseth Thee, that is best, Nanak
  has no other wish but this."

—Bilawal M.I

"Whatever pleaseth Thee is good,
Thou art forevermore,
O Formless one." —Jap Ji

"O Nanak ! Creat is the Power of *Naam*,
Let there be peace unto all, through Thy Will."

The pontifical blessings generally end with the words: *Urbi et Orbi*. (To the citizen and the world)

In the end there comes a stage when the *Sadhak* feels no necessity even for prayer.

"Sweet art Thy doings,
Nanak only desireth *Hari Naam*." —Asa M.5

"In whatsoever state I am, that is a Heaven unto me." —Asa M.5

When God is the knower of the secrets of all, there hardly remains anything to be told unto Him. With the Lord seated in each one of us and permeating our very being, what need there is to pray and to whom ?

"*Hari* is the indweller and knoweth all,
To whom then art we to tell of us ?
—Sorath M.5

"What should the lowly urge for ?
When God is seated within all." —Kanra M.4

Saints always live in this state. Being one with His Will and conscious co-workers with Him, prayer of itself becomes a heresy for them, and savours of scepticism. Nature's forces simply wait on them. Howsoever slight a thought may arise, it must, like an immutable law, prevail. God is ever with His devotee and looks after him with more care and attention than any loving mother would look after her child.

Guru Arjan tells us:

"He who asks from the Lord, whatever it be, that is granted forthwith,
O Nanak ! the words of the devotee, do come true wherever he may be." —Dhanasari M.5

"For the sake of His devotee, He runs far and near,

And stands ever by his side,
Whatever the devotee asks of Him, that must happen." —Asa M.5

Kabir, describing the condition of his mind, tells us that it has, like the water of Ganges, become so transparent that even God has become enamoured of him:

"Kabir, thy mind is now as clear as the Ganges-water.
Even God Himself restlessly follows him shouting 'Kabir', 'Kabir'. —Shalok Kabir

When all the desires of a devotee get automatically fulfilled, he naturally becomes desireless. The wish-yielding treasure of *Naam*, becoming manifest within, takes care of him at every step.

"With the Lord God as a loving Father, the child has no hunger for aught, for
Thou art the treasure-house of *Naam* and he gets whatever he wishest." —Malar M.5
The prayers of the devotee cannot go in vain."
—Bilawal M.5

When the Great Donor is with the devotee, the latter has nothing to pray for or ask of; for he is one with Him and there is nothing besides to whom he may address.

Guru Arjan draws a wonderful pen-picture of this state of perfect satiety:

"Deathless is He and I have nothing to fear,
He being immortal, I have not to wail;

He is not poor and I have no want,
He being above sorrow and pain, I too have none;
Besides Him there is no destroyer, He and I live enternally,
When He is free, there is nothing to bind me,
Both of us are above the stage of bondage;
He being immaculate, I too have no stain,
He being within me, what taint can I have;
He has nothing to think of and nothing is left for me to think,
Neither of us has any thing to gloss over;
Desireless is He and I too desire nothing,
He is spotlessly pure and so am I,
I have no existence apart from Him, for He alone is;
O Nanak! through the Master, has this delusion, disappeared,
Having dipped in Him, we are dyed in one colour."
—Asa M.5

(*ii*) *Ask for Guru (A competent Living Master)*

The Lord is overflowing in the Guru. "Being immanent in the Guru, He distributes the Word." The Guru is God-personified. Pray to the Lord:

"Oh Merciful Father, the destroyer of our ills, be kind and send us the *Satguru*. He is the very support of our life. He, alone, is the one through whom we can attain to Thee."

"Thou art Merciful and the destroyer of all our ills. Give attention to our prayer. Kindly make us to search for the *Satguru*, from whom we may know Thee. —Gauri M.4

"O Lord, oh! the very Soul of Universe, be kind to grant us faith in *Naam* (the Mystic Word), and the benevolent and purifying company of the true men." —Kanra M.4

"O Lord, allow us that *Satguru*, remembering whom we shall be liberated. At his very *Darshan* (a sight of him), the mind feels exhilarated. We shall, again and again, lay our very life at his lotus feet."

—Bhairon M.4

Beg from the Lord and the *Guru* their Divine Vision, complete self-surrender and the gift of *Naam*. Pray also, to be saved from the evil tendencies of the mind and the senses. Being Omnipotent, He is capable of granting us all these boons. Besides this, the seekers may pray for the gift of happily resigning to His sweet Will. We have no good qualities in us. Being ignorant and of low mental calibre, we are not well versed in religious ceremonies etc. Therefore, Oh Beloved! have mercy on us. Bestow on us the capacity to sing Thy praises and to remain happy in whatever be Thy Will.

"Virtueless, blind, ignorant and unlettered as we are,
We know not what is good for us or for the society,

Be merciful, O Lord! that Nanak may sing of Thee,
And he may ever rejoice in Thy Will and Pleasure." —Suhi M.4

In addition to this, pray for the grant of devotion and *Naam*.

"By repeatedly uttering Thy *Naam*, we are freed from doubt and fear,
Those who are absorbed in Thy sweet remembrance, will be freed from the cycle of birth and death." —Gujri M.5

"We are humble mendicants at Thy door,
Be gracious enough to bless us with Thy *Amrit* (Nectar), of the Word,
Satguru is my Master-Friend, kindly grant me his contact." —Maru M.4

"Forgive me for my lack of good qualities and make me your own, my Master,
Thou art Infinite and Unknowable,
Graciously make known to me Thyself through *Shabd*—the Mystic Word." —Prabhati M.3

"My Lord, the Creator, is the ocean of all goodness,
Who can adequately praise Him,
Saints pray for the gift of the highest bliss of *Naam*." —Suhi M.5

"We are but humble mendicants and beggars, Thou art the Protector of our honour,
Be kind and give us the alms of Thy *Naam*, so that we might remain always intoxicated in Thy love. —Dhanasari M.3

O Lord! take us under the shadow of Thy protecting wings,
We are unable to do anything on our own,
Graciously give us Thy *Naam*."

—Dhanasari M.5

"O my Divine Friend, grant that I may every day make an effort to think only of Thee all the time,
O give me a contact with *Shabd*—the Bread of life."

—Gujri M.5

"The company of saints dyes us with His *Naam* and all our desires are fulfiilled,
Nanak prays for Thy mercy and Thy Grace and prays that we may remain absorbed in the sweet memory of Thy lotus feet."

—Bihagra M.5

"O *Rama* (All-Pervading God)! make us the servant of Thy Servants.
Grant us the boon to bask in the light of Saints so long as the breath of our life lasts."

—Kalyan M.4

"O Merciful Lord! Graciously grant us the lighted dust from the feet of Saints."

—Gauri M.3

24. *Guru is the greatest gift of God.*

The truest riches and the greatest gift of God is the God-man, the person who having realised himself is established in his God-head. He is in a sense a polarised God or pole from where God manifests Himself amongst His

people. Limitless and infinite as God is, he too is beyond comprehension by the finite powers of perception. He can, however, be apprehended in the Master in-as-much as a vast sea can be apprehended at the sea beach with bathing ghats and sea waters gently flowing in for bathers to have a safe dip.

As like attracts like, so man must, of necessity, have man as his teacher, for none else can teach him. The way to God, therefore, lies through men. Some God-man alone can tell us of the 'Way-out' from the world and a 'Way-in' into the Kingdom of God—now a Lost Province to mankind in general. The fall of man was brought about by man and the regeneration of man too is to be brought about by man. But there is a world of difference between man and man—the latter being God-in-man.

"Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secrets unto His servants—the Prophets." —Amos 3-7

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God." —Timothy 3-16

"The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us." —Bible

Guru is God-personified, for God speaks through, the *Guru*,—

"Poor Nanak speaks whenever He desires of him to do so." —Guru Nanak

"The words of the Master are the words of *Allah*, though seemingly the same are uttered by *Abdullah* (the Servant of God)."

—Maulana Rumi

"I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works."

—Bible.

The greatest prayer a person can, therefore, offer to God is that He may, in His unbounded mercy, establish his contact with His prophets who may lead him Godward. The God-man or the Prophet shows him the Way—the Grand Trunk Road that leads to God. It is nothing but the Sound-Current or Sound-Principle differently called by different sages: 'the Word or the Holy Ghost' by the Christians, '*Kalma, Baang*-e *Asmani* or *Nidaa-e-Arshi*' by the Mohammedans, '*Udgit, Akash Bani, Naad* or *Sruti*' by the Hindus, and '*Shabd* or *Naam*' by the Sikhs. Zoroaster calls it '*Sarosha*' and the Theosophists 'the Voice of Silence'. Christ speaks of it as 'The Voice of the Son of God'. God overflows in the Guru and unites man with the Word to reach back to his True Home.

When the dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live."

—St. John 5:24-25

This Sound-Current then is the means to salvation. It is the Master-Key that unlocks the Kingdom of Heaven. It bestows life eternal on

man and restores him once again to the 'Garden of Eden' from which he was driven away by disobedience to God. What greater boon can a man seek from God but restoration to the Kingdom that had been lost by him. It marks the end of his long exile through countless centuries and hails back the lost sheep to his fold. The Master is the kind Shepherd, who, out of compassion, does all this for the erring humanity. Such high souls hold a commission from the Most High.

"I am come in my Father's name."

—St. John 5-43

"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." St. John 5-44

We have similar references in the Sikh Scriptures as well.

"Kabir knows the secrets of God and brings His message to the mankind. —Kabir

He who sent thee into the world, He calls thee back again and wistfully awaits thy home-coming." —Guru Arjan

Herein lies the greatness of Master-souls. They effect a re-union between man and God. The long drawn period of separation comes to an end and the lost child is restored once again to the Father. It marks the Grand Home-coming through endless trials and tribulations. The saving Grace of God is stirred by the God-man

and the purpose of life is fulfilled. Henceforth the Son and the Father are not only reconciled but become one.

"From the great deep to the great deep he goes." —Lord Tennyson

No longer is he an exile into the world but an inheritor of the Kingdom of God: Established once more in his native God-head.

This is the true redemption of the covenant between God and man, and this is the true resurrection or rising from dead as vouchsafed by the Son of God to man. This is the fulfilment of God's Law and of the purpose of human birth.

"This is the fundamental Law of God that no one can reach Him except through *Satguru* (the Master-soul)." —Bihagra-ki-War M.4

Again:

"God clothed himself in vile man's flesh, that so He might be weak enough to suffer woe."

—John Donne

Therefore, always pray God to bring us in contact with a God-man—the Master.

25. *What one need ask from God-man:*

The Master is the mouth-piece of God. He is the pole at which God manifests His Godhood. He is the bathing ghat or the sea beach where persons can safely enter into the sea for a dip. He may be likened to a switch which has in it the concentrated energy of the Power

House. The Son and the Father are one and administer the same Law. "I and my Father are one" sayeth Christ. Clothed in Heavenly light, He radiates light into the world.

"I am the light of the world, and he that followth me, shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." —St. John 8-12

God or a God-man is the Treasure-House of *Naam*. *Naam* is God's Master-instrument with which He created the universe and which is sustaining it. The moment He withdraws the power of His, the result is disintegration, dissolution and death.

Saint John calls it 'Word':

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of man. And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not."

A prophet, a saint, an apostle, is truly the repository of God's Power. He is the veritable abode of God Himself:

"God comes into the world in the garb of a *Sadha* (saint)." —Maru M.5

Whoseover then has a longing for God, must hasten to a true Saint and seek God from Him. Nothing but the 'Saving Grace' of the Master, can work out a true transformation

in the wise man of the world, fully identified, as he is, with the sensual plane.

"I think of Thee and lovingly long for Thee,
I pray the saints to manifest Thee in me."
—Malar M.5

"I pray to the *sadhs* for I hear God is of His devotees,
Nanak has an intense longing for Him, O ! have mercy." Todi M.5

"Separate for ages, unite now O Lord,
This is the greatest desire of my heart.
Hear my prayers through the Master,
Nanak has no other wish but this." —Maru M.4

"I pray to the saints for union,
That is what Nanak asks for." —Suhi M.5

"The souls that have realised the Lord, I shall enquire of them,
In all humility, I shall supplicate to know of the Way to Him." —Telang M.I

"Saints are the representatives of God, and to them we pray,
We are but filthy worms, O *Satguru*, grant us the light of N*aam*." —Gujri M.4

Bhai Gurdas has given us a beautiful specimen of prayer for the Sikhs :—

"I am a depraved sinner and a heretic,
A thief, a gambler and a house-breaker.
A thug that lives on illicit gains,
A constant pray to all kinds of lusts.
A slave to the five passions, viz, lust, anger, greed, attachment and egoism,

A betrayer, an ungrateful wretch, abhorred by all.
O ye, with all these faults, and still more,
Remember the *Satguru* for He is compassionate indeed." —War 36-Pauri 28

Once this relationship of Master and disciple is established, the latter becomes fully dependent upon him. The acceptance by the Master means acceptance of the entire responsiblity of the Karmic debt or burden of the sikh (disciple) including *Pralabdh* (fate or destiny), *Kiryaman* (actions or deeds performed from day to day), and *Sanchit* Karmas (the store-house of unfructified karmic impressions). Like an official liquidator, it is his job now to liquidate and wind up the debts of the disciple and free him from the same so as to put him on his feet again, for the second birth leading to the life of spirit.

"We are now of the Master, a bondslave unto Him,
O Nanak ! with the relationship of Master and servant, save us now." Suhi M.4

"I long for an eternal friend,
Ever true, from end to end." —Gauri M.5

"I pray to the *Satguru* to lead me to the Friend,
By meeting whom, peace descends and death vanishes. —Sri Rag M.I

"O Master ! may I live by beholding Thee,
And my life's aim be fulfilled.

O fulfil my prayers that I may live by Thy Word,
May I ever abide under Thy protection,
Whose value only the blessed few may know,
And that too only through the Master's Grace.
Grant this boon, O my Beloved,
That Thou may ever dwell in my mind.
Nanak has but one wish alone,
That He may never forget the fountain-head of all virtues." —Suhi M.5

"Everything is in Thy Controlling Power, O Destroyer of fear,
So saith Nanak, save the ignorant, O Merciful One." —Bilawal M 5

"Seeing that the whole world is being consumed in invisible flames of fire, I come to Thy feet,
I pray, O perfect Master, save us as Thou wilt."
—Vadhans M.3

APPENDIX

Prayers—Miscellaneous and Brief specimens:

It would not be out of place to give below some specimen prayers for the benefit of the readers, with a few introductory remarks in this behalf.

Man is an ensouled body or in other words, soul plus body, and of the two, soul is the more precious because it is the active and live-principle that enlivens the body. In fact, body has no value apart from the soul.

The great souls or Mahatmas are of varied type. There are Mahatmas who ask of God such necessities of life as may keep their body and soul together, so that after satisfying their physical needs they may spend their time in meditation of God. Jesus, in his prayer, asked for 'daily bread' to satisfy the Nature's foremost need—'give us this day our daily bread'. Such souls regard everything as of God and ask from Him for the fulfilment of their primary needs from day to day and then engage in uninterrupted devotion for the rest of the time. The physical body is the vehicle of the soul and has,

as such, to be fed for the higher purpose of life, to wit the advancement of soul. Hunger, says Kabir, is a great handicap in the path of devotion.

"O Kabir ! the dog of hunger spoils meditation
by snarls,
Just throw a crumb to it and then sit at your
ease."

In the beginning the *Satguru* teaches a disciple to pray for his needs, as would appear from the following:

"One cannot meditate with hunger gnawing
within,
Take thou the rosary away from me, O Lord."

—Shalok Kabir

Again:—

"Grant unto me flour, ghee and salt besides
some pulse,
That I may have a day's ration to live upon.
A cot, a pillow with a bed and a quilt,
That I may meditate or Thee undisturbed.
I have not been greedy in my demands,
For I love nothing better than Thy Word."

—Sorath Kabir

Again :—

"Give unto me so much that I may live on in
peace,
And none turns away hungry from my door."

—Kabir

Bhagat Dhanna. likewise prayed:

"O Lord! I pray unto Thee,
Thou dost supply the needs of thy devotees.
Furnish me with pulse, flour and butter,
That I may happily live in comfort.
Give me clothes and a pair of shoes to wear,
And a good supply of wheat and cereals.
And milch cattle for the supply of milk,
Besides a fine mare to ride on.
And a homely obedient mate in the house,
This is all Dhanna asks for."—Dhanasari Dhanna

In Lord's prayer of Jesus Christ, we have a beautiful example of all that one need ask:

"Our Father who art in Heaven, Holy is Thy Name,
Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day the Bread of Life, and forgive us our offences as we forgive those who offend us.
By Thy Spirit lead us out of all temptation, and deliver us from evil.
For Thine, Thou Everlasting Lord, is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory forever."

—Manual of Prayer May 1957, Page 15

Similarly, we have a beautiful prayer from The Lord to the Earthly Mother:

"Our Mother which art upon earth, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, and thy will be done in us, as it is in thee. As thou sendest every day thy angels, send them to

us also. Forgive us our sins, as we atone all our sins against thee. And lead us not into sickness, but deliver us from all evil, for thine is the earth, the body, and the health."

—Essene Gospel of John-E. B. Szekely—
Chapter 22, 1-39

The disciples of Buddha, without considering the necessity for formal prayers, have always wished well for all the humanity and this, in fact, is the highest type of prayer, whether we may or may not call it prayer. Whenever they, after self-ablution, sit in meditation in the morning and evening, they express like this:

"I wish to have a universal love for all. I wish that all creation on all sides: above me, and below, on my right and left, may live in peace. I wish well unto all, living either in this world or in heaven or in hell. Let there be peace everywhere.

In the Hindu Scriptures—Rig Veda—there are prayers invoking God for the fulfilment of physical and other wordly needs. In Sukat 53 of Mandal 6, we have:

"O Lord of valour, we pray for all the gifts of God. We may have success in our endeavours and the gift of food, and all such things that are desirable. O God of Love, let there be nothing in one's way to gain food in abundance, and have our wishes fulfilled."

In there daily *Sandhya*, the Hindus recite:

"*Brahm*, the eye of the three regions and the *Devas*, is in front of us. We wish to have him before us for a hundred years and may live a hundred years to see him, to hear him to sing of him, and live for him happily and in prayer for a hundred years and more."

The *Vedantins* also think of, dwell upon and meditate on the *Mahavakyas* (their traditional aphorisms) *Aham Brahm Asmi* (I am Brahm) and *Tat Twam Asi* (I am as Thou art).

The Gayatri—the most sacred Mantra—is a prayer to the Lord to lead us to Him, the Sun of all Light.

Khawaja Hafiz Shirazi, in a state of Divine Intoxication, prayed to his Master as:

"Helpless I am and Thou art helpful,
Separated are we for myraid of ages.
In sheer compassion, take me to Thy abode,
Attracted by Thy wondrous beauty, I follow Thee.
Else I could not budge an inch from my place,
Fortunate was Ayaz, the slave of Mahmud,
For having won the kingly favour."

Again, he said:

"It is a proud privilege to serve at Thy door,
With Thy glance of Grace, make me worthy of it."

Shamas Tabrez prayed to his preceptor as:

"O butler, serve Thou the wine of the other world,
That may give a vision of the Invisible.
A draught whereof may give Divine Intoxication,

And close the critical eyes of the flesh,
And open the mystic eye within."

Again, he said:

"O Master! ostrich lives on the Kaaf Mountain,
Thou art the true abode of the bird of my soul.
As candle is the altar for the moth,
My life is a thousand time sacrifice on Thee.
Throw down the sluice-gates of the waters of life,
And make manifest the fabled spring of *Kausor*.
Grant me the intoxication of love,
And keep my wandering wits at anchor.
My only prayer is that you enter and occupy your seat in the mosque of my body,
And sanctify my poor abode with Thy holy presence."

The set prayer among the Muslims, runs as under:

"In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.
Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds;
Most Gracious, Most Merciful;
Master of the Day of Judgment.
Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek.
Show us the straight way, the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace,
Those whose portion is not wrath, and who go not astray. Amen!"

Here are a few specimen prayers to the Master from Sant Kabir:

"With folded hands, I pray; hear O Ocean of
mercy!
Grant me the gifts of compassion, humility,
knowledge and happiness, in the company of
the saints.
Kabir, with thoughts fixed on Thy lotus feet
prays,
O Guru! tells me about the True Path of the
saints."

"What should I ask of Thee? for I feel greatly
ashamed,
I commit sins of which Thou art a veritable
witness; how then can I please Thee?
While I have all the faults in me, Thou art all
goodness,
If I may forget Thee, I pray that Thou mayest
not forget."

"O Lord! I may never forget Thee even in the
midst of millions,
You can have many like me, but for me there is
none beside Thee.
If I were to forget Thee, where shall I get
shelter?
I cannot give my heart to others: *Siva, Virancha*
or *Narda*."

"With all my faults, do not get angry with me,
The Master doth forgive the lapses of his
servant;
Forgetful Kabir is all tainted vile,
But the Master has a loving heart."

I am steeped in sins, sins without number,
It is for Thee to forgive me or to kill me.
Forgive, forgive and again forgive, O Forgiver Divine,
An ever erring child I am, but I depend on the Father's Grace.
Thou art the abode of infinite virtues with no vice whatever,
But when I search my own self, I find myself full of all ills."

"There is not a single virtue in me, listen O Master Divine !
It is through the Power of Thy Word that I am honoured everywhere.
I am all false, while the Lord is Sterling Truth,
Full of sins as I am, O save me if Thou wilt."

"Born with a thistle in my flesh, full of all evils I am,
Thou art the great Donor and a Saviour, O save me right.
O save me right for I am caught in a great whirlpool,
And shall be carried away by the strong current if Thou shalt not take hold of me."

"For other sinners, Thou art a well of refreshing waters but I am an ocean of sins,
I only depend on the Word of the Master, hear O Merciful One,

I know not what love is, nor have I any other
virtue,
I wonder, how I will have the love of my
Beloved ?"

"If I meet the Master, I shall cry out my anguish,
With my head on His feet, I shall speak out my
mind.
Permeating all, Thou art immanent in every
form,
If I have to leave Thee off, who else will ferry
me across ?"

"The ocean of life is too deep to be measured
and sketched,
With Thy mercy, O Merciful One, I may get a
footing.
Full of all evil, I have naught else to boast and
am hard of heart,
But perfect as my Master is, He can land me
ashore."

"O my perfect master ! take a firm hold of me,
And lead me to the goal with no break on the
Way.
Grant me the gift of devotion, O the Munificent One !
I wish for naught, save a ceaseless service unto
Thee.
Master ! Thou art generous and merciful,
I am drowning in the mid-stream, take me over
to the shore."

"How can the love between Thou and me sever?
As the leaf of the lotus abides in the water, so
dost Thou in Thy servant;
As the night-bird *Chakor* gazes at the moon all
the night o'er,
So do I my Lord, thy servant;
From the beginning of time until the ending of
time, there is love between Thee and me,
How can such love be extinguished?
Kabir therefore saith: As the river plunges into
the ocean, so doth my heart in Thee."

Ode to the Satguru

"Long and dreary has been the struggle of the
mind but all in vain,
All potent art Thou, and can do aught, then
why this delay?
Wandering up and down in the wheel of life,
I have never had a success,
O Munificient Lord, have mercy, free the spirit
and concentrate it all,
The arch enemy of the mind is but a waste,
O sow in it the seeds of love,
Enamoured of false delights it knows not true
happiness,
Hankering after the pleasures of the world, it
has never tasted the sweetness of the Word,
What should I do? How should I try to set it
right?

For it does not take to the Word of the Master.
This mind is a curious medley and has no interest in the *Shabd* :
How can it save itself from the vicious circle of births and deaths,
When it does not practice the Word given by the Master ?
It shall keep tossing in the world and remain in the clutches of *Yama* (the God of Death).
Forgetful of the Word of the Master, it shall suffer terribly,
O Master ! immanent in every heart, why dost Thou not lead me out ?
When there is none else, whom I can call as mine own, O take me to the Heaven above,
Have mercy on me now, and take me to Thy Heavenly House as Thou may."

"Entangled in evil thoughts, I am an utter stranger in a strange land,
Reform me this time and I shall lovingly think of Thee, all the time.
I feel repentent and sad as I know not how to contact my Beloved,
He lives in the High Heavens while I am a creature of the earth and miserable without Him.
O Satguru ! attend to my tale of woe and take me out of the domain of Death ;
In sheer helplessness, I cry unto Thee, O hear,

Thou the Gracious and the Merciful to all but this unfortunate wretch.
How may I tell Thee of my pain for I am lying on a bed of thorns,
Thou, O Beloved! hast encouraged me to fly to the heavens with the wings of love,
Thy Grace has enabled me to meet my Beloved, and to escape from all toils and miseries."

"O Master! just listen to my prayer, I bow unto Thee again and again:
Drive the evil out of me and grant me proximity of Thy lotus feet;
Ferry me safely ashore for my barque is in the midst of an eddying whirl,
None save Thee is my own, save me as Thy own, O Master!
With all my ills I am yet Thine, and Thou art Donor beyond all limitations.
I am in great pain, sorrow and affliction, rescue me at Thy pleasure,
I worship Thee with all my heart and soul, and make a sacrifice of all unto Thee.
Now I have a powerful sheet-anchor though I know not Thy worth,
Thou hast explained the mystery of the inner Sound-Current but the devil of the mind listens it not.
Wandering in the ups and downs of life, it runs after name and fame;

How may I turn its direction without Thy
loving Grace, O Master?
O Lord of my spirit: listen to my prayer, pull
the mind out from its rut."

"I ask of the Master but one gift: make me
recognise the mystic Word,
All my life have I wandered with the mind,
O free me from the bondage of *Karmas*,
Let my Conciousness recede within and hear the
ceaseless Sound, and the mind grow still.
Thus can I escape from all ills and reach the
eternal place of Sat Shabd (the true mystic
Word).
Grant unto me the intoxication of the Word
so that I may remain absorbed in It.
Then harm and dishonour shall not affect me,
for I shall always be lost in Thy sweet
memory.
Do not let me be swept off by the time-stream,
but grant the sheet-anchor of the Word.
My mind has now grown humble, O Master!
let it lose itself in Thy lotus feet."

"O Master! take me to Thy abode:
I am a useless fellow, always entangled in doubts
and delusions,
O Thou the Merciful! take me to Thy Abode,
I have no count of the sins I have committed,
and my mind does not catch the Word,

What should I do ? My strength fails me and my mind finds no rest,
O Satguru ! take pity on me, for I remain miserable all the time,
Neither the Consciousness recedes within nor the mind gets stilled, and I cannot appreciate the greatness of the Word.
I have taken to the Path of the Masters, a High Road to spirituality,
Why then O Master dost Thou take no hold of me ?
This noble Path of the Masters shall suffer a great set-back if I succeed not in my endeavours.
I cry from my egoistic reason, and do not resign myself to Thy Will,
I beg of Thee again and again, O give me the gift of Thy Word.
O Master, Word personified as Thou art, I come to Thee for relief."

"How can I liberate myself from the wiles of the mind ? this is the problem of my soul.
It has cast a deady spell of worldly pleasures, and I am thus separated from my Real Home.
Enmeshed in the ten senses, I find myself in a vicious circle,
Having been expelled from the tenth portal, I am wandering through the nine gates,
Caught in the web of worldly pleasures, I find no Way-out of the bondage,

Besides the Master I see nobody capable enough
to lead me out of the wilderness,
I am all afeared of *Yama* (the Lord of Death),
who else can free me of this fear ?
I have degraded myself to the life of beasts as I
have never loved the Master,
As a branch fallen off the tree, I am cast away
from the Real Home,
I beg the Master to get my mind to love His
lotus feet.
Purify my heart with Thy *Satsang*, for there it
will separate itself from the body and contact the Mystic Sound,
And then will it drink *Amrit* (nectar) from the
fount of immortality.
And then will all pains and miseries disappear
and the soul will have no fear.
Then will I contact the Sound-Principle (Word
or Shabd) and shall gain the love of my
Swami (Lord),
O Lord ! make me thine own: I have come, for
I seek shelter at Thy feet." —Sar Bachan

Hymns of Mira

"Herein I have suffered a lot,
Drive away my sorrow and scepticism.
Now I am in search of Thee, O Lord !
Take me beyond the bounds of affliction,
The whole world is flooding adown
The current of births and deaths.

O Lord of Mira—Girdhar Nagar !
Rescue her from the giant wheel of births."

"I know no peace without seeing Thee, for I know the deep anguish in my heart,
Over and over again I go to the house-top to see if Thou art coming ; and my eyes have swollen red with weeping.
The whole world is false and transitory, and so all the friends and relations ;
With folded hands I pray that Thou may hear me.
This mind of mine, a great scoundrel, is ever out like an elephant run amuck.
The Master having explained the secret, has taken me in his fold and I am at rest.
O Girdhar Nagar—the Lord of Mira ! I am now fully absorbed in contemplation of Thee,
Every moment I feel Thy immanence everywhere and seeing Thee I feel blessed."

"My friends have turned enemies and hate me one and all, but Thou alone art my well-wisher,
My boat is marooned on the high sea, and I feel restless all the day and get no sleep at night.
By constant waiting and watching, I have grown lean like a thorn,
The arrows of love have pierced my heart and I cannot even for a moment, forget the love-pangs.

Thou regained the accursed Ahilya, from a stone in the wilderness,
O what grouse there be against Mira—O tell to me of that.
The perfect Guru, Ravi Das, came form the Supreme Abode to my rescue,
And He opened out the Way for me, and I became one with the Lord."

"I am being swept down in a fearful current, save me O Lord, if Thou wilt,
O ! none is my own in this world, but Thou alone art mine.
All friends and relations : one and all,
All are attached to me through selfish ends.
Let the Lord of Mira listen to her supplications,
Grant her the boon of Thy feet, if Thou wilt."

From Dhani Dharan Dass

"Grant unto me, O Master ! the gift of devotion, for Thou art a great Donor,
I wish I may not forget Thee all my life and serve Thee always,
Pilgrimages, fasts and vigils attract me not nor the worship of gods ;
I may have no desire for anything save one for Thee ;
Thou art to me everything, O the Possessor of all riches !
I need nothing when I have a Perfect Master by my side ;

I would not like even in dream to think of wife, wealth and children, but of Thee and Thy Greatness.
Listen ye to the prayer of Dharam Das, O the Munificent Lord !
Take me out of the gyres and make me Thine own."

Surdas prayeth as under:

"O Lord ! have mercy on me,
Thou Knower of all hearts, I have no virtue in me.
I cannot get rid of my evils, not even momentarily,
I have on my head a heavy load of cunning and deceit.
Entangled amongst wife, son and riches, I have lost my very self,
O, come to the rescue of 'Sur', as his barque is about to sink."

From Sikh Scriptures

"We are severed from Thee through our own deeds : show mercy and take us unto Thee again,
Having wandered in all directions, tired and worn out we have come to Thy feet,
Just as a dry cow is of no consequence and vegetables without moisture go stale and become valueless,
So we, the worthless, have no peace without our Beloved.

If the Beloved reveals Himself not in the house (body), the same, nay the very town where one lives is like a desert,
And all the make-up and ornamentation of the body become useless.
In the absence of the Beloved, all friends and relations appear like angels of death (Yamaduts),
Nanak prayeth: kindly grant me the gift of Thy Holy Word,
And unite me with the Lord, who abides for ever." —Bara Maha 133

"My mind yearns for the sight of the Lord, as a thirsty man doth for water,
My heart is pierced with the love's dart from my Lord and He alone knows my miserable state.
Whosoever narrates to me the tales of my Beloved, he alone is a brother unto me,
Come together ye brother, accept the Master's Word and sing songs of my Beloved.
O Lord! fulfil Nanak's desire: Grant him Thy holy vision, the harbinger of peace."

"O mother! how can I find my Beloved, the Lord of my soul?
I am not beautiful, nor wise, nor strong,
I am a stranger come from afar,
I have no riches, nor I am youthful;
Grant this helpless creature Thy shelter (Sharan).

I have become love-stricken from endless seeking,
I am wandering about, thirsty for a vision of the Lord,
Now, O Nanak! the most merciful Lord has quenched my thirst through contact with the saints." —Gauri M.5

"Oh Ocean of Mercy! always reside in my heart
Grant me such wisdom that may make me love the Lord,
I ask for the dust of Thy servant's feet, that I may rub it over and over again on my forehead;
Fallen as I am to the lowest depths, I am sure that I will be purified by singing Thy praises.
Let Thy Will be sweet unto me, and whatever Thou doest should be pleasant for me;
Whatever Thou givest I should accept it with a good grace and should not wish for aught else;
Knowing Thee to be always near me, I wish to be the dust to Thy servants;
If we get the company of saints, then alone can we attain the Lord,
We are always Thy boy-servants, and Thou art our Master,
Nanak saith: I am a child and Thou art my father and mother,

And Thy Naam in my mouth is just like exhilarating nectar." —Todi M.5

"It is through Thee that I live, do not forsake me even for a moment,
O grant me but one gift: remove my doubts and protect me my Beloved, Thou the Knower of all secrets;
The wealth of the Word is more than millions of earthly kingdoms,
The nectar of Thy Look, is the highest honour for me:
Oh Omnipotent Beloved: grant me the power to sing Thy praises all the time,
O Benefactor of all souls, I take shelter with Thee,
Nanak lovingly sacrifices himself at Thy feet."

—Todi M.5

"Lord, make me the dust of Thy feet, most merciful Beloved, the Captivator of my heart,
Be Gracious enough to satisfy this craving of mine.
Thy praises are being chanted in all the ten directions,
Thy all-knowing wisdom is present everywhere;
Those who sing Thy praises, my Creator, shall have no regrets when quitting the world.
The contact of the saints relieve us from all bonds and pains,

Nanak knows that all pleasures, riches and delights are of no consequence, without the love of the Lord." —Todi M.5

"There is none else beside Thee, Thou the Creator and aught happens as Thou desireth,
All my strength is from Thee and so the support of my mind :
Nanak always meditates on Thee alone."

"O Par Brahm, Thou art the highest Benefactor, and sustaineth all,
Thou art and Thou shall ever be : Unreachable, Unknowable, the Highest and the Endless.
Those who serve Thee are freed from fear and pain,
Through Guru's Grace, Nanak sings Thy praises."

"Whatever we see is evolved from Thee, Thou the Ocean of goodness, beautiful Lord,
Oh seeker, remember Him constantly : but this remembrance, O Nanak, cometh only through His Grace.
I am an humble servant of one who meditates on Thee,
Company of such a one liberates all the world,
Nanak saith : Oh Lord ! I pray for the luminous dust of the saints : fulfil this craving of mine." —Tilang M.5

"Thou art a most loving Lord with many disciples like me,

Thou art an Ocean of jewels, with depths
immeasurable,
Thou, O Supreme Wisdom! be merciful unto
me, and give me understanding to meditate
on Thee all the time,
O my self, do not be vain and proud, but humble
like dust for that is the Way to liberation,
The Lord of Nanak is the highest of all, and
many like Nanak serve His Will."

—Suhi M.5

"Be gracious, my Lord, that my eyes behold
Thy Gracious Form,
Give me millions of tongues, my Beloved, that
I may sing Thy *Naam*,
Singing of Thee will save me from the path of
Yama and drive away all pain and sorrow:
The Lord permeates the water, earth, ether
and everything besides and I see Him
everywhere.
All doubts and delusions having vanished, I see
the Lord as the nearest of the near,
O Lord! be merciful to Nanak, that he may
have Thy blessed vision."

"My Beloved Lord, grant me millions of ears
that I may hear Thy praises forever,
Hearing it is that purifies the mind and snaps
the bondage of time,
All bondage end by constantly meditating on
the Everpresent;

And then comes in rejoicing and True Knowledge.
By constantly repeating His Name (*Naam*) we become concentrated into an effortless state of Bliss.
Remembrance of the Lord burns away all sins and evil thoughts fly like enchanter driven,
Nanak prayeth : Lord be kind that men may hear the voice of the Everpresent Word."

"Millions of hands serve Thee, and millions of feet walk in Thy Path,
Thy Word is the boat to ferry us across the ocean of life and death,
Whoever sits in that boat crosses the *Bhavsagar* (the fearful sea of life and death), and is blessed for ever with no desire unfulfilled.
All the deadly sins vanish giving place to Bliss, and the Mystic Sounds become audible,
Whatever the mind desires that comes to pass,
The Unstruck Sound of the Word is a priceless gem,
Nanak saith : Be kind and grant us the boon of treading Thy Path all the time."

"This is the boon, this the honour, this the treasure of *Naam*, and fortunate is he who comes by it ;
This is the delectable delight and this the highest enjoyment, for one who meditates at His feet :

Now the mind is absorbed in the contemplation
of His feet and has taken shelter in Him,
the Creator of all,
Everything is Thine, O Lord! and Thou art
mine; O Merciful One,
I am worthless fellow and Thou an Ocean of
Bliss: this realisation comes through the
company of the saints,
Nanak saith: The Lord hath been kind: my
mind is now absorbed in the sweet contemplation of His lotus feet." —Suhi M.5

"Thou art my father and Thou art my mother,
Thou art my relative and Thou art my brother,
Thou art my Protector everywhere,
What fear can I have?
I found Thee out through Thy Merciful Grace:
Thou art my shelter and also my honour,
There is none else besides Thee,
Whatever happens is of Thy doing and nothing
is of us." —Majh M.5

Thou art our Lord and to Thee we pray:
The soul and the body are Thy gifts,
Thou art mother and father to us, and we are
Thy children:
Through Thy kindness we get immense happiness,
Nobody knows Thy greatness,
Thou art the Highest Lord of all.
Thou art the Sustainer of all creation,

Which is created by Thee and obeys Thy Will.
Thou alone knowest Thy vastness,
Nanak is always pouring himself out in Thy love."

—Gauri M.5

"O Benefactor of this unworthy soul! my life, body and mind are all Thine,
How can one guage Thy greatness?
What cleverness can a purchased slave show?
All my body and soul are Thine: O most beautiful and attractive Beloved!
I shall give all that I have for a glimpse of Thee, Thou my Benefactor, O Lord!
I am a poor beggar at Thy door, and Thou art ever Gracious,
There is nothing that I can do.
Oh Master! Thou alone art Unreachable and Limitless:
What service can I render?
What words can I utter to please Thee?
How can I have Thy *Darshan* (a look at Thee)?
We cannot know Thy Greatness, nor Thy Existence Infinite:
My mind is yearning just for a glimpse of Thee.
I persist in begging of Thee without feeling any sense of shame,
The gift that I may have the luminous dust from the feet of Thy saints to smear on my face.
The Master showed His mercy, O Nanak!
And the Lord liberated me through His Grace."

—Suhi M.5

"Who is ours besides Thee ?
Oh my Beloved, the Sustainer of my life breath.
You only know the inner state of my mind,
And you alone are the Good Friend :
I have derived all happiness from Thee,
Oh my Master ! Unspeakable, Unweighable,
I cannot describe Thy various plays,
O Thou, the Ocean of all goodness and the source of real happiness.
Thou art Unreachable, Ever-Present Lord but becomest known through the Master's Grace.
Thou hast eliminated all my fears, and have liberated me after finishing off my egoism,
The fear of life and death is also gone in the company of saints ;
I touch the feet of the Guru and serve Him.
I sacrifice my whole being a million times for Him through whose Grace I have crossed the sea of fear,
Nanak saith: I have now found the Beloved."

—Gauri M.5

"Thou art my Protector here and hereafter,
Thou nourished me in my mother's womb :
The fire of *Maya* cannot affect those who are intoxicated with Thy love, and are absorbed in Thy holy contemplation.
What qualities of Thine can I describe ?
I realise Thy presence within my mind and body :
Thou art my friend and Master,

I know not anyone else besides Thee.
Whomsoever Thou takest under Thy protection, not a breath of the scorching air can touch Him.
Thou art the Lord and in Thy *sharan* (shelter) one gets immense happiness.
Thou makest Thyself known through meditation in the company of the saints: Thou the Highest, the Limitless and the Priceless.
Thou art my True Master and I Thy humble slave:
Thou art Lord, Thy greatness true,
Nanak sacrifices his all for Thee." —Majh M.5

"Thou art my boon companion and my friend,
Thou art my Beloved and my love goes only to Thee,
Thou art my spouse, honour and adornment,
And I cannot live without Thee, even for a while."

"Thou art my jewel and my very life,
Thou my Master (Sahib) and my Ruler (Khan too,
I shall ever abide by Thy Will and shall do what Thou willeth,
Wherever I look, I see Thee there in fullness.
I will recite with my tongue Thy Word that made me fearless,
Thou art my great Treasure and *Bhandar* (merchandise),

Thou art sweetly sweet and the support of my
mind,
Thou art my honour and I am absorbed in Thy
love."

"Thou art my shelter and Thou my support,
I worship Thee in my mind and body after hav-
ing got this secret from the Guru,
The Guru made me firmly established in the
One,
O Nanak ! the servant of Hari is ever sustained
by Hari." —Gauri M.5

Cherishing Salvation

"Pray forget not Thy servant if for nothing else
consider my previous love of Thee and
possess my heart.
Thou art Gracious and Uplifter of the fallen and
so look not to our faults.
Thou art my soul, the very life breath, and all
my riches and happiness,
Kindly burn down the veil of egoism that
separates me from Thee :
How can a fish live without water ?
And how an infant without milk ?
Nanak is thirsty for the light of Thy lotus feet :
A glimpse of Thee brings in all happiness that
one needs." —Bilawal M.5

"Blessed is the love which pours itself out on
the lotus feet of the Beloved ;

When most fortunately I found the Perfect One,
I obtained the fruit of millions of austerities and meditations,
I am a poor slave of Thine and depend upon Thee alone with nothing else to depend upon.
The repetition of Lord's Name has vanished all my fears, and with the collyrium of Thy Word (all wisdom), I have been roused from a long drawn sleep of ignorance,
Thou art Fathomless and Extremely Great, O Lord ! the veritable Ocean of kindness, full of jewels.
Nanak seeks and begs for the Divine *Naam* : he bows at the feet of the Lord." —Kanra M.5

"Lord be gracious and keep me in Thy *sharan* (shelter), for I know not how to serve Thee, low and ignorant as I am.
I have the proud privilege to have Thee as my Beloved :
We are all sinners and always commit mistakes, while Thou art the Benefactor of the worthless.
We run after *Maya* with our back to the Lord for such are our deeds,
Thou givest us everything in Thy compassion, while we are callously ungrateful to Thee,
Entangled in Thy gifts, we forget the Donor Divine,

There is nothing beyond Thee, Oh my Liberator,
Nanak saith: Oh I have come to seek Thy shelter,
liberate this muddle-headed one also."

—Bilawal M.5

"Oh Hari ! save me from disgrace, as I am greatly afraid of *Yama* (Death),
I have come to Thy *sharan*, Oh Ocean of mercy :
I am foolish and greedy and I have run myself out in sinning and sinning;
The fear of death haunts me in and out all the time,
I am being consumed in the invisible fires within.
I have tried many remedies to obtain salvation,
And have searched in all the ten directions,
But the secrets of the Lord residing within, I could not find.
Devoid of all virtues, I have not done any meditation or undergone any austerities,
What should I do now ?
O Nanak ! exhausted and defeated as thou art,
Seek thou His anchorage and pray for the boon of fearlessness."

—Jaitsari M.9

"Do hear my prayer, Oh my Lord !
I am Thy disciple even if filled with millions of sins,
Thou art the Destroyer of all ills : ever kind and bewitching, the Dispeller of sorrows and woes,

Grant me the shelter at Thy feet, and protect me O Thou, the All-Pervading Absolute.
Seated in the hearts of all, Thou art both seeing and hearing us through, for Thou art nearer than the nearest,
O Lord ! do hear Nanak's prayer : save me, for I am Thy disciple.
Thou art ever All-Powerful, while we are poor beggars entangled in the worldly attractions,
O, do take us out of the mire and free us from the bondage of mind and matter,
For we are every moment paying the penalty for our faults :
O my Creator, Thou are unattached and free from all limitations.
Tired as I am, from wanderings into many incarnations,
O have mercy upon me,
Nanak prayeth : I am the slave of Hari :
The Lord is the support of my life-breath."
"Thou art All-Powerful, while I have inferior intelligence, my Lord ;
Thou, however, providest even for the ungrateful,
Perfect as Thou art in Thy Merciful Vision :
O Creator, Thou art Beyond all understanding and Limitless, while I am lowly and know naught :
With my back upon the pearls, I collect shells,
Brute, low and ignorant as I am,

This hard earned *maya* (wealth), collected through means fair and foul is transitory and disappears in the twinkling of an eye.
Nanak seeks the shelter of the Omnipotent One,
Do save me from ultimate disgrace."

—Bihagra M.5

"We are dirty, Thou art pure: we are so unworthy of Thee, O Benefactor,
We are fools, while thou art All-Wisdom and possessor of all powers (arts).
O Madho, what a world of difference between the two;
We the failing ones and Thou so perfect:
We the sinners, and Thou the Destroyer of all sins, Oh beautiful Beloved:
Thou hast created everything and hast provided for everyone with life, body and soul,
This worthless one is without qualities, and yet Thou givest him all out of Thy kindness.
Thou doest good, which we do not appreciate and yet Thou art always kind,
O Lord! protect Thy children, Thou the treasure of everything and an ever-abiding King.
Thy creation begs of Thee:
Nanak saith: Low as we are save us for the sake of Thy saints."

—Sorath M.5

"Make me Thine own. Oh Merciful One, for I have taken shelter at Thy door,

Save me, Oh Benefactor of the poor, I have tired myself out in quest of Thee,
It is in Thy very nature, to love Thy devotees and to lift up the fallen :
There is none else save Thou to hearken to my prayer,
I pray, take me up, Oh Merciful One, and get me out of the ocean of *Sansara* by holding my hand." —War Jaitsari M 5

"Oh my Beloved; hear, how I wander alone in the wilderness?
How can I have patience without the Beloved? the Carefree as He is.
A wife cannot live without her spouse during the long and tortuous nights,
I do not get a wink of sleep, I only yearn for my love, O listen to me,
In the absence of the Beloved, none has any sympathy for me, and I cry all alone.
Nanak saith : the wife doth get her Beloved if she really feels unhappy and is extremely miserable without Him."

"The Beloved of my life has left me, who is there to unite me with Him,
There is happiness when love unites, for then the Word (Mystic Sound) becomes pleasant.
When the Word doth become blissful, we get the right place, with the inner (mystic) lamp enlighting the body,

Hear my friend, we become really beautiful by singing the praises of the Supreme Truth.
When Satguru united me with the Beloved, I got the pleasure of His company and the Divine Word, full of nectar, made me buoyant with happiness,
Nanak says: a wife can have true happiness, when the Beloved is also fond of her:
Though forgetful of Thee, we are still Thine own, Oh Lord!" Gauri M.I

"Even if I commit mistakes, still I have the proud privilege to belong to Thee,
He whose mind has gone eleswhere, will surely die from the very regret of having done so.
How can I leave the side of my Beloved? when I see that He is the Sustainer of my soul."

"Thou art my friend and a relation, and I am highly proud of Thee,
When Thou art in, I am happy and feel that my poor self is honoured.
Now that Thou hast been so kind to me:
Pray do not let me look anywhere else, and
Let me keep the gift of Thy remembrance ever locked in my heart.
I will walk down leagues to have Thy *Darshan* (a love glance),
I will love to hear Thy stories should it please Thee and the Satguru.

Millions of suns and moons cannot equal the glory of Thy one hair ;
Thou art the greatest of the Great : the Indescribable and the Ineffable.
I cannot praise Thee sufficiently: Thy friends run into millions and all superior to me,
Just bestow one Gracious Look on me, and I will be the happiest creature."

"By seeing Him, the mind gets Supreme Peace, and all mental ills leave off,
How can I forget Him who saturates me with His Divine Presence ?
With great humility I threw myself at His feet, and He made me His own for the asking,
Nanak got Him through the help of a Saint, for it was so pre-ordained." - Suhi M.5

"Thou art my father, Thou art my mother,
Thou art my soul and life, O Bestower of Happiness :
Thou art my Master, and I am Thy slave,
And apart from Thee, none else is mine.
Kindly grant that I may be singing Thy praises day and night :
We are Thy instruments and Thou playest on them.
We are beggars at Thy door, give us the Gift,

Oh our Benefactor:
Through Thy Grace I may enjoy inner Bliss,
For Thou art permeating every heart.
Through Thy Grace alone one can repeat Thy sweet *Naam*, and sing Thy praises in the company of saints.
Through Thy mercy, our pains are eliminated,
And through Thy Grace, the lotus of the heart opens out.
I lovingly pour myself out at the feet of the *Gurdev* (the Radiant Form of the Master),
Whose *Darshan* (sight) is fruitful and whose service so purifying.
Be kind, Oh my Lord! that Nanak may sing Thy praises constantly." —Bhairon M.5

"My Lord, what a poor helpless fellow am I?
Thou hast raised me into a man from a very low birth,
And herein lies Thy greatness,
Thou art the Lord of all, the Giver of soul and the life-breath,
And none can describe Thy numerous attributes.
Beloved of all, Thou providest nourishment to all, Thou the Sustainer of all life,
None knows Thy mystery permeating as Thou art unto the vastness and the Beyond, for all this is Thy manifestation,
Nanak prayeth: Grant me the ship of the saints' company to cross the ocean of life and death." —Sarang M.5

"Keep us as it pleaseth Thee, we have come
unto Thy *Sharan* (protection),
We commit mistakes day and night, and the
Lord forgives us and protects our honour,
We are Thy ever-erring children, and Thou our
Guru and Father,
O give us good advice:
Nanak is Thy servant, save him from disgrace."

—Asa M.4

Imploring unequalled boon of *Naam*

"Satguru I have come to Thy feet:
Give me the bliss of *Naam* for Divine honour
and free me from all anxieties.
I cannot think of any other place of rest, and
as a last resort, I am at Thy door,
Whether I deserve it or not, O save me, as
Thou wilt for merit I have none.
Thou art ever forgiving, ever kind and sustaineth
all,
Nanak hath taken his refuge with the saints:
kindly protect him this time." —Todi M.5

"I get real life from a vision of Thy Divine Face,
and feel myself fortunate indeed,
Hear this prayer of mine, my Lord:
Make me Thy disciple and give me the gift of
Naam,
And keep me under Thy protection, my
Benevolent Lord:

It is only the rare few who appreciate the
Guru's Grace,
Hear my appeal, my Lord and Friend :
Let Thy lotus feet abide in my heart,
Nanak makes but one request :
Do not slip away from my remembrance,
O, Ye the Ocean of All-Goodness."

—Suhi M.5

"Oh Lord ! be kind and grant that we may sing
Thy praises,
I wistfully wait for the time when the Lord
will hug me to His bosom.
We are children without wisdom and are steeped in stark ignorance,
Thou our Father, make us understand.
Sons commit mistakes again and again, while
the Father of us all still loves them.
Whatever, O Lord ! whatever Thou givest us,
we gladly accept the same, for we have no
other shelter whereto we may turn.
The Lord shall be dear to such devotees, who
are dear to the Lord,
Through Thy Grace, we shall merge ourselves
into Thee,
Through Thy Grace alone can we constantly
remember Thee,
Nanak has come to Hari's door,
He will save me from disgrace"

—Kalyan M.4

For granting solemn chance to serve saints
and for self-surrender to Lord.

"Oh Merciful One, I ask of Thee to make me a slave of Thy servants :
When Thou speakest to me, I feel alive, and get all wealth and kingdoms.
The treasure of *Naam* nectar is plentiful in the house of the Lord's devotees,
I feel elated in their company for there I hear His praises,
My body gets purified in their service.
I bring water for them, fan them, grind their corn and get happy by washing their feet,
I cannot do anything of myself.
Show me Thy Grace, Oh Lord!
Give me a place to live with the Divine Saints."

—Gujri War M.5

"Kindly show me Thy Gracious Face that I may sing Thy praises at dusk and dawn and dust the feet of Thy servants with the long hair of my head,
That is my inner desire, O Master ! for there is none besides Thee that I may think of.
I meditate on Thy lotus feet, and look towards Thee :
Merciful Lord ! the Master of all.
With folded hands, I pray that Nanak,
Thy servant, may repeat Thy Divine *Naam*,

And get into the Beyond in the twinkling of
an eye." —Gujri War M.5

"O Lord! I have just one desire:
O Treasure of mercy and benevolence, make me
a disciple of Thy saints;
I may make obeisance unto them at early early
morning hours,
And reverently look at their beaming faces day
and night, and
Dedicate myself, body and mind to their service.
I may ever sing praises of the Lord with my
tongue, and
With each breath of my life, let me remember
the Lord, and let me live with the saints
from day to day.
My only food and wealth is Thy Divine *Naam*,
Thus Nanak enjoys real bliss."

—Dev Gandhari M.5

"Do me one favour: let my forehead be at the
feet of the saints,
My eyes have His *Darshan* (look)
My body lie in their luminous dust,
The Word of the Guru surge in my heart,
And the Name of the Lord abide in me.
Liberate me from the five deadly sins—(lust,
anger, greed, attachment and egoism),
And burn all my doubts and delusions, O Master,
Whatever you do we may take it to be for our
good without any regrets whatsoever.

You are the Benefactor of Nanak, O Lord !
Liberate me through the company of Thy saints." —Bilawal M.5

For shelter from five Passions to help crossing Ocean of Life and Death

"My Father save me: I am without any virtue,
While Thou art All Virtuous ; I am all alone and have to contend with five enemies.
Protect me, Oh my Saviour ! the foes play a hell with me and make me terribly miserable,
I have come therefore to Thy *Sharan* (shelter).
I have tried all *Sadhans* to avoid them, but they do not leave me.
Having heard of the protective power of the saints, I have come to them for relief,
They were kind enough to come to my rescue and I found a great relief through them.
The Saints gave me a lesson in fearlessness and I practised their Word :
Thus I did conquer the fearful foes through the blissful *Bani* (the Mystic Sound),
Nanak says: I, having seen the Light, have attained the Deep Stillness (*i.e*, the Highest)." —Gauri M.5

"You make me free from passion, falsehood, greed and speaking ill of others ;
Weed all the evil propensities out of me and call me near to you ; and
Make me the knower of Thy Will.

Hari's servants sing songs of happiness ;
O teach me the way whereby I may never forget Thee even for a moment.
Most fortunately, Nanak met the Perfect Guru,
And since then his mind has ceased to wander anywhere." —Sorath M.5

"I know none other than Thee:
Thou art with me, Thou my friend and companion, O Lord !
What fear can I have when with Thee as my sheet-anchor and my hope ?
Let me not forget Thee for a moment, even while I sit or stand and am in bed or out of it :
Keep me always in Thy *Sharan* (protection), for
This world is a dreadful ocean of fire,
O Nanak's Satguru ! Thou art the giver of real happiness ;
And we are Thy children, Oh Lord !" —Asa M.5

General for all

"All the sins of the saints' devotees who serve the Lord, are eliminated and done away with,
By kind to us, Oh Lord ! and keep us in the company of those dear to Thee.
My Lord ! I cannot describe Thy Greatness,
We, with the dead load of sins, like mill-stones round us, were sinking in midstream, when Thou so graciously lifted us out.

For many incarnations, we were entangled in the
obnoxious lures of the world but when we came into contact with the saints, we were saved.
As gold is purified by heating in the fire, so
doth our dirty mind get etherealised.
Recite His *Naam* day and night, and make your
heart saturated with the love of Hari,
His *Naam* is a perfect remedy in this world :
Our egotism too was finished up by the Power
of His holy Word ;
Hari is unique and beyond our understanding
and still beyond the beyond,
O the Limitlessly Conscious Personality,
Be Thou kind to Thy servant :
Nanak has come to Thy *Sharan* (shelter)."

—Dhanasari M.4

"We are blind and blindly entangled in the
stupefying enjoyments of the senses,
How can we follow the Path of the Guru ?
Only through the Grace of the True Teacher,
can we join His fold." —Dhanasari M.5

"There is none so poor as I am and none more
merciful than Thou art,
What then is needed ?
I have but an unsteady mind :
Oh, lead me to a Perfect Saint.
When I pour out all my love for the Lord,

Why art Thou so silent ? O Madho.
We have been separated from Sach Khand for many an incarnation ;
But this life I dedicate unto Thee.
Ravi Das says : I live in the hope of having Your sacred *Darshan* (a meeting),
Which I have not had for such a long time."

—Dhanasari Ravi Das

"What qualities of Thine can we describe ?
O Master ! Thou art Limitless and beyond all description.
We sing praises of Thy *Naam* day and night and that is our only hope.
We are ignorant and do not know how to cross over to Thee.
The lowly Nanak is His bondsman and a drawer of water,
Make us live as Thou pleaseth, for now we live under Thy shelter,
We commit mistakes at every step,
But Thou art the Forgiver and Keeper of our honour,
We are Thy ignorant children, and Thou art our Father and Master :
O Teach us the Way :
He took Nanak out of serfdom and has accepted him as His own."

—Asa M.4

"O Master, have mercy upon us,
And take us to Thyself.

We are but worthless cargo,
And Thou can pilot us to our End."

—Malar M.4

"O Master, come and unite me ;
Who have been long separated from my Lord ;
My body and mind have been emptied of attachment,
O fill me with the Light of God." —Asa M.4

"Having renounced all things,
I have come to Thee my Master ;
O take me under Thy wings,
And make of me what Thou wilt." —Suhi M.5

"The Master is the true devotee of the Lord,
And so to Him I pray ;
We are but worthless creatures,
And seek Thy protection,
O grant us the gift of Thy Word." —Gujri M.5

"Seeing the world in flames,
We turned to the Lord for refuge ;
O Master, save us and deliver us,
For therein lies God's Glory." —Vadhanas M.3

"I am purifying my heart,
To make it fit for Thy Altar,
O True Friend ! I have come to seek Thy refuge,
Teach me the Way to God." — Sorath M.5

"You alone know your mysteries,
For you are all complete ;
O give refuge to a worthless orphan,
And lead him to his destined goal."
—Gauri M.5

"I pray to my Master, to unite me to my Lord,
Meeting whom I may find peace and freedom from death." —Sri Rag M.I

"When I prayed for the company of the saints,
Hearing me the Lord's true devotee came unto me ;
It was my good fortune that they made me their own." —Todi M.5

"Nanak prays to the Master that he may be united with God." —Suhi M.I

"O my Beloved, grant me the holy Word of God.
Those that have full faith in the Master, their worries are over." —Sarang M.4

"O Master, we have come to Thy fold,
To have the peace of the Divine Word ;
And the Grace of God,
And a riddance from all our cares." —Todi M.5

"May I live beholding Thee, O my Master,
And may my deeds bear fruit ;

This is our prayer to Thee, O Lord,
Grant us the boon of Thy Word and make us Thy own."
—Suhi M.5

"This is my only prayer to Thee,
That I lost in Thy meditation be dyed in Thy colour."
—Bilawal M.5

"Thou Giver of all gifts, grant me this boon,
That I may be freed from vanity and ego, from lusts, greed and wrath."
—Suhi M.I

From 'Book of Common Prayer'

The following prayers have been selected from the "Book of Common Prayer" as used by the clergy of the Church of England. These will serve as inspired examples of spiritual devotion, reverence, humility, supplication and praise to the Supreme Creator. Such sublime incentives are inherent in all religions, establishing the universality of a common origin and destiny for all mankind.

"O God, the strength of them all that put their trust in Thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of thy Grace, that in keeping of Thy commandments we may please Thee, both in will and deed; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O Lord Who never failest to help and govern them whom Thou dost bring up in Thy steadfast fear and love ; Keep us we beseech Thee, under the protection of Thy good providence, and make us to have a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O Lord, we beseech Thee mercifully to hear us ; and grant that we, to whom Thou hast given a hearty desire to pray, may by Thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O God, the Protector of all who trust in Thee, without Whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy ; increase and multiply upon us Thy mercy ; that Thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal : Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord. Amen."

"Grant, O Lord, we beseech Thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O God Who hast prepared for them that love Thee such things as pass man's understanding; Pour into our hearts such love towards Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Lord of all power and might, Who art the Author and Giver of all good things; Graft in our hearts the love of Thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of Thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O God, who declarest Thy Almighty Power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity; Mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy Grace, that we, running the way of Thy commandments, may obtain Thy gracious promises, and be made partakers of Thy heavenly treasure; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Almighty and Everlasting God, Who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and are wont to give more than either we desire or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of Thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and

giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and meditation of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen."

"Almighty and Merciful God, of whose only gift it cometh that Thy faithful people do unto Thee true and laudable service; Grant, we beseech Thee, that we may so faithfully serve Thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain Thy heavenly promises; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Almighty and Everlasting God, give unto us the increase of faith, hope and charity and that we may obtain that which Thou dost promise, make us to love that which Thou dost command; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Keep we beseesh Thee, O Lord, Thy Church with Thy perpetual mercy; and because the frailty of man without Thee cannot but fail, keep us ever by Thy help from all things hurtful, and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O Lord, we beseech Thee, let Thy continual pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and because it cannot continue in safety without Thy

succour, preserve it evermore by Thy help and goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Lord, we beseech thee, grant Thy people Grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the Devil, and with our pure hearts and minds to follow Thee the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O God, for as much as without Thee we are not able to please Thee; mercifully grant, that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O Almighty and Most Merciful God, of Thy bountiful goodness keep us; that we, being ready both in body and soul, may cheerfully accomplish those things that Thou wouldst have done; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Grant, we beseech Thee, Merciful Lord, to Thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleaned from all sins, and serve Thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen"

"Lord, we beseech Thee to keep Thy household the Church in continual godliness, that

through Thy protection it may be free from all adversities, and devoutly given to serve Thee in good works, to the glory of Thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O God, our refuge and strength, Who art the author of all goodness; be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of Thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O Lord, we beseech Thee, absolve thy people from their offences; that through Thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the hands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed: grant this, O Heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen."

For Selflesness

"O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love. For it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life." —Saint Francis of Assisi

At Bed time

"O Heavenly Father, protect and bless all things, that have breath; guard them from all evil and let them sleep in peace."

—Albert Schweitzer

Spring time prayer

"Now winter's gone, and spring is there: now tiny leaves, and blossoms sweet, lambs in the fields, and baby calves, and budding flowers about my feet. O teach me gentleness, please God, to care for all things weak and small, that I may grow strong and brave and helpful in my love for all." —Anonymous

We may conclude this section with the following few prayers:

"Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"O Lord Christ, we Thy faithful soldiers dedicate this new-born day to Thee, praying that it may shine in Thy service as a pure pearl in the chaplet of our life, O Thou Great King of Love, to whom be praise and adoration for evermore. Amen."

"Teach us, O Lord, to see Thy life in all men and in all the peoples of Thine earth, and so guide the nations into the understanding of Thy laws that peace and goodwill may reign upon earth; through Christ our Lord. Amen."

"To the most Holy and adorable Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three Persons in One God ; to Christ our Lord, the Only Wise Counsellor, the Prince of Peace ; to the Seven Mighty Spirits before the Throne ; and to the glorious Assembly of just men made perfect, the Watchers, the Saints, the Holy Ones, be praise unceasing from every living creature ; and honour, might and glory, henceforth and for evermore. Amen."

"The Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Christ our Lord ; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen."

"Amidst Thy encircling power I stand,
On every side I find Thy hand,
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God.

Let these thoughts posses my breast
Wherever I roam, wherever I rest,
Let not my weaker passions dare,
Consent to sin, for God is there."

Hindu

"Om: The thousand-headed Purusha, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed, even He, encompassing the Universe on all sides, remained over ten fingers in extent. Purusha alone is all this, that which has been and that which is to be. Moreover, He is the Director of Immortality; and hence manifests Himself as the Universe evolving by means of food. Of this magnitude is His greatness, even greater than this is Purusha. One-fourth of Him forms all created things, the Immortal three-fourths are in the regions above."

"One God sits hidden in every creature, pervading all, the In-most Self of all beings, the Watcher over all acts, abiding in all created things, the Witness, the Heart, the Absolute, Free of all attributes."

"The One Dweller, Self-controlled, who divided the One Seed into the Many, who is their Atma, those steadfast ones see Him enthroned within their Atma, for them alone is Bliss Eternal, not for others."

"That blessing do we choose, in order that we may sing for the purposes of the sacrifice, and for the Lord of the sacrifice. Divine blessing be ours. May blessing be on the children of men.

May that which is of good effect go always singing upwards. May blessing be on us, the two-footed, blessing on the four-footed. Om! Peace. Peace, Peace!"

Zoroastrian

1. We pray for the gracious joy of God the Omniscient Lord of Existence. Beneficent Holiness is the best of blessings. It alone is the source of true happiness. Happiness to him who is sincerely righteous.

2. O Lord! through the most beneficent and excellent Path of Purity may we see Thee, face to face. May we then observe Thy many aspects. And may we be finally merged into Thy Benign Presence.

3. Cleanse Thou my soul. O Omniscient and most Bountiful Spirit! Grant me strength through Perfect Wisdom—goodness through devotion, courage through righteousnes—and leadership through Benevolent Mind. In order that I may acquire spiritual knowledge to instruct others, grant me that power, which is indeed the resulting blessing from the Lord of Benevolence. Reveal unto me the laws of religion through upright Mind and pure conduct. Then does Zoroaster give away, in charity, even his own life besides his perfect benevolent

Wisdom, to the Omniscient Lord. He dedicates his power of speech and action, to serve *Asha* (Holy Divine Spirit) and *Sraosha* (the angel of inspiration).

4. As is *Ahu* (the High Ruler) absolute in His Will, so is the Spiritual Teacher *Ratu* wielding authority through the law of righteousness. The reward of good deeds, done as offering unto the Lord, is the gift of Benevolent Mind. Whoever gives protecting help to the needy, is entitled to receive power from the Creator.

5. O Omniscient God: when malicious people seek to harm me, who else shall grant me protection, except the Divine Fire and Wisdom that are within me? Indicate to me, O God! the good deeds that may propagate righteousness in this world. In order that I may expound to others the teachings of the good Faith, tell me, O Lord! how the evil forces may be foiled. Surely Thy protecting words that are eternal will prevail. Reveal unto me a teacher, who may be full of Wisdom, and proficient in the lore of both the worlds, so innocent that the Angel of Inspiration may approach him through his loving thoughts. A true teacher is Thy beloved agent.

6. O Immortal: Archangel: I offer unto

you my sacrifice and devotion through thought. word and deed, and with all my heart I dedicate the very life of my existence. I adore the path of Purity.

7. Whoever amongst the living beings is foremost in loving sacrifice, is always within the knowledge of the Lord, because of his righteous conduct. We pay our homage unto all such men and women who have sought to serve.

Jain

"Reverence to the Arhats,
Reverence to the Perfect Ones,
Reverence to the Heads of the Sangha,
Reverence to the Preceptors,
Reverence to all holy Monks in the World.

All these Five are worthy of Reverence. They are all protectors against sin. Among all auspicious things, this is the most auspicious."

Hebrew

"Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord
is One.

May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, and of our fathers, to cause us to walk in Thy Law and cleave to Thy commandments; and lead us not into sin, transgression, temptation and contempt. Remove from us every evil inclination and cause us to adhere to the good.

Oh, grant us grace, favour and mercy in Thy sight, and in the sight of all that behold us; and bestow gracious favours on us. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who bestowest gracious favours on Thy people Israel. Amen."

(The word "Israel" is composed of: ISR= Righteous, EL=Omnipotent; hence means: those who righteously walk in the Law of God).

Buddhist

"Praise be to the Lord, the Holy One, Perfect in Wisdom.
Praise be to the Lord, the Holy One, Perfect in Wisdom.
Praise be to the Lord, the Holy One, Perfect in Wisdom.

I go to the Buddha for refuge,
I go to the Law for refuge,
I go to the Brotherhood for refuge.

For the second time, I go to the Buddha for refuge,
For the second time, I go to the Law for refuge,
For the second time, I go to the Brotherhood for refuge.

For the third time, I go to the Buddha for refuge,
For the third time, I go to the Law for refuge,
For the third time, I go to the Brotherhood for refuge.

I promise to abstain from taking the life of any living creature.

I promise to abstain from taking anything with thievish intent.

I promise to abstain from the evil indulgence of bodily passions.

I promise to abstain from falsehood.

I promise to abstain from any intoxicating liquor or drug."

Theosophy

(Invocation by all)

"O Hidden Life! vibrant in every atom;
O Hidden Light! shining in every creature;
O Hidden Love! embracing all in Oneness;
May each who feels himself as one with Thee,
Know he is also one with every other."

—Annie Besant.

ERRATA

Page	Line	Errors	Corrections
24	21	all the	all and
31	29	of words	or words
50	22	specimens of prayers	specimen prayers
65	22	start	starts
74	25	comfort	comforts
80	12	beings	begins
81	23	Creat	Great
88	11	men	Man
91	7	Established	established
93	29	pray	prey
98	21	or	on
103	8	tells	tell
113	17	Dharan Dass	Dharam Dass
117	penulti-mate	relieve	relieves

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